Innovative Practices in Early English Language Education

Edited by David Valente · Daniel Xerri

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“As plurilingual education continues to expand around the globe, early English language education has gained considerable traction across contexts, yet, it has been scantily researched. This volume is a solid response to this niche as it brings together educators at the potent nexus between research and practice and it interrogates important issues from innovative perspectives. The editors have skilfully organised the contributions in such a way that children and (future) teachers occupy a central position.”

—Dr Darío Luis Banegas, Lecturer in Language Education, *University of Edinburgh, UK*

“Publications focusing on early additional language learning are burgeoning, demonstrating that the field continues to grow in importance and dimension. Nevertheless, there are many lacunas. This collection makes a unique contribution by fusing theory with practical implications, by covering topics which are unconventional, and thus advancing the field. It is an exciting collection of chapters and highly relevant for graduate students, teacher educators and researchers across the globe.”

—Dr Sandie Mourão, Research Fellow, *CETAPS, Nova University, Lisbon, Portugal*

For Jill Turner whose quiet enthusiasm for innovation in early English language education is fondly remembered. Also dedicated to Ros Doyle and Sue Hicks—their innovative practices live on through their colleagues and the children they educated.

Foreword

As recently as 2014, Fiona Copland and I were writing that teaching young learners (YLs) was seen as something of a neglected area of research and publication (Copland & Garton, 2014). In the intervening eight years, the body of work in this area has increased exponentially, leading Ibrahim (2020) to refer to teaching young language learners as a ‘runaway train’ (p. 203).

In spite of the spread of primary English language teaching (PELT) both in schools and in publications, as Littlejohn (this volume) notes, approaches have been based on well-established views of teaching and learning languages that were originally developed for adults. Moreover, in the case of communicative language teaching this was developed for adults learning in small groups and in well-resourced classrooms (Enever & Moon, 2009), a situation that is a far cry from the majority of primary school classrooms around the world. It is therefore very much to the credit of the editors of this volume and to the chapter authors that this book represents a decisive move away from such approaches, bringing new perspectives on PELT. This is a book that stands out from the crowd.

The volume is explicitly about *Innovative Practices*, but it is also about so much more than practices. In particular, it is about intertwinings and connections: connections to other disciplines, to global skills, to the world beyond the language classroom; connections that are rarely made in ELT. The result is a book which is innovative, informative and thought-provoking.

All the chapters are based on the fundamentally important connection between theory and practice. This is nothing new: nearly 30 years ago, Mark Clarke was calling for what he called the dysfunctions of the theory/practice divide in ELT to be addressed, and many in the field have been trying to do that ever since—the work of the IATEFL Research SIG comes to mind. Here each chapter has a section on *Current Issues and Research* in which the discussion is situated in a particular area of theory or research. This is followed by a section on *Practical Applications*, effectively demonstrating, not how theory is applied in practice, but how theory informs practice and vice versa. Moreover, a number of chapters also use the theory to present a proposed framework (Chaps. 2, 4, 7 and 8, for example), as well as the practical activities. The framework approach is important in that contexts of English language learning vary greatly around the world so while specific activities may not be feasible, a framework can be of practical value to practitioners who can use it to make context-appropriate adaptations, extending the relevance of the proposed innovation beyond its original use.

We also find connections to the wider context beyond ELT, with chapters drawing on a range of disciplines and theories. These include mainstream education (Chaps. 2, 3 and 11), multimodality (Chaps. 6, 8 and 13), and assessment (Chaps. 9 and 10) to mention just three. Such areas are not often found in books about English language teaching and certainly not about PELT. Making these connections brings new perspectives to possibly familiar but under-researched topics, such as intercultural competence (Chap. 4) or peer assessment (Chap. 10), as well as introducing new areas of PELT practice such as multilingual teacher education (Chap. 12).

The chapters also link PELT to a variety of concepts and ideas which are addressed in new ways. While there are whole chapters on key areas such as agency (Chap. 3), translanguaging and multilingualism (Chaps. 5 and 12), and visual and digital literacies (Chaps. 6 and 7), these notions are also woven into and underpin other chapters. Notable, for example, is the number of chapters that place children at the heart of the learning process, where they are seen as social agents who can and should be actively involved in their own learning (Chaps. 2 and 3, for example). Notable too is the number of chapters that refer to multilingualism. Whilst the notion of translanguaging is gaining attention, it remains somewhat abstract for practitioners; monolingual approaches tend to prevail outside the narrow confines of academia. It is therefore particularly welcome to see chapters that offer practical suggestions for translanguaging in the classroom as well as promoting positive views of multilingualism and the use of L1.

All the chapters in the volume therefore make innovative connections, be they to the wider context of educational goals or diverse linguistic repertoires (Chaps. 2, 3, 4 and 5); to different modalities and educational technologies (Chaps. 6, 7 and 8); to assessment and learning (Chaps. 9 and 10); to mainstream education approaches (Chap. 2) or between classroom practices and teacher education (Chaps. 12, 13, 14 and 15). No matter how long you have been working in the field, you will encounter fresh ideas, be led to think differently, or feel prompted to try out something new.

In their introduction, David Valente and Daniel Xerri state that their aim in choosing chapters was driven by ‘a desire to explore areas which have either received insufficient attention in the literature and/or those which have been reimagined by their authors through a fresh and invigorating lens’. They have certainly been very successful in achieving their aim, which is to the benefit of all of us working in PELT and which makes this volume a very welcome addition to our field.

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Sue Garton

Foreword

It is my greatest of pleasures to write this short preface and recommend this book to all who are passionate about teaching and researching young children as language learners. I remember that when I was first contacted by the publisher to review the proposal for this volume, I was struck by the ambition and the enthusiasm of the editors, who were keen to bring together work that they considered innovative, and wanted the book to appeal to teachers, teacher educators, student teachers, as well as researchers, by linking both theory and practice in an accessible way. And this is exactly what they have achieved here.

Although child L2 education has become a vibrant field of research over the last two decades with more and more books, book chapters and journal articles focusing on young language learners, this body of research is often criticised as heavily adult-oriented because traditionally all research methods, approaches and questions had been inherited from the adult literature. My search through a decade of research in key journals in our field suggests that a large majority of published articles (on young learners) discuss vocabulary learning, grammar and focus on form, task-based learning, motivation, and strategy use, often comparing children of different ages. For me, what makes this volume stand out is that it explicitly opens up opportunities for new, innovative practice in children's language classrooms, by moving away from a focus on the more traditional questions of learning the L2 language system, to themes that are more holistic and distinctly fresh. These themes are now gaining ground in our complex, (post)pandemic, multilingual and multicultural worlds of teaching and learning. The holistic topics explicitly build bridges with other/new literatures and build on students' and teachers' unique realities, by linking to other disciplines, to mainstream education, to global skills and to the world beyond. The main links can be summarised as follows:

- Links to wider context: mainstream education, learner-voice and agency, wider educational goals, diverse linguistic repertoires (Chaps. 2, 3, 4 and 5)
- Links to different modes and educational technologies: multimodality, multiple literacies, digital pedagogies (Chaps. 6, 7 and 8)

- Links to learning and responsive pedagogies: assessment for learning, peer and self-assessment (Chaps. 9 and 10)
- Links to mainstream education approaches: (Chaps. 2 and 11)
- Links between classroom practices and teacher education: mutually enriching learnings (Chaps. 12, 13, 14 and 15)

If we were to create a word cloud with the most often occurring words and phrases across all chapters, we would definitely need to include (1) *multilingual realities and diversity*, (2) learner and teacher *agency*, (3) *dialogic teaching and learning*, (4) an emphasis on *learners as unique individuals with real life experiences and interests*, (5) an emphasis on *relationships, whole persons* (both learners and teachers), (6) *an open-ended approach to content*, (7) an emphasis on *social issues and civic duties* and a concern about *local and global issues*, and (8) *a deep, critical, creative and reflective approach to learning*.

All authors discuss the importance of relationships between teachers and learners in a classroom that appears to be more democratic and more respectful of all stakeholders than traditionally has been expected. In such classrooms, a unique kind of authenticity is promoted that grows out of what the learners want and need as active, creative and capable 'owners' of their learning. Most chapters also make reference to creative uses of various modern technologies, some of which learners are expected to be expert users of.

Each chapter addresses relevant theoretical issues and concepts and then attempts to make sense of this research by translating the most important insights into everyday practice. By briefly discussing cutting-edge scholarship, each chapter provides just enough content to inspire those interested in following up key references and reading perhaps further in the area. The practical part of each chapter offers clear explanations and illustrations of key concepts and principles discussed, and ready-to-use frameworks, steps, guidelines, or action points to be implemented in early years and primary English classrooms. Teachers can immediately apply the ideas proposed by the authors. Since each chapter is relatively short and written in a style that is easily accessible to a wide range of readers, this volume is going to be hugely useful and inspirational to readers both within and beyond ELT contexts. Most chapters also encourage further research and exploration of the topic area under discussion and interested readers will likely be able to develop their own ideas or adaptations of the original activities or strategies suggested by the authors.

The chapters cover a diversity of contexts relating to research and practice with both younger as well as older child learners.

I hope that future readers will enjoy reading this book as much as I have.

Annamaria Pinter

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David Valente would like to acknowledge the children, teachers, student teachers, teacher educators, academic managers and other professionals in early English language education he has had the pleasure of working with over the past 25 years. These diverse, challenging and rich pedagogical interactions and experiences have contributed to the conceptualisation of this edited volume and its aims to connect the too frequently separate worlds of scholarship and classroom practice.

In addition, David would like to thank Daniel Xerri for his patience and encouragement while co-editing the volume—made ever more challenging as all of the various stakeholders were learning to navigate the challenges of writing during a global pandemic. Daniel's attention to detail and his experience with academic publishing have clearly benefitted the contributors.

Daniel Xerri would like to acknowledge the support of the ELT Council in Malta. It was at the 7th ELT Malta Conference in October 2018 that the idea of a book on innovative practices in early English language education was first discussed. Daniel would like to thank David Valente for leading this project and for working tirelessly on the production of this edited volume.

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1. Introduction: Confluence, Connections and a Call to Action in Early English Education

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According to Leketi Makalela (2016), a prominent researcher of children's translanguaging in school contexts, '*Motho ke motho ka batho or umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* … means "a human is a human because of others" or "I am because you are; you are because we are"' (p. 188). Used by speakers of Bantu languages in Southern Africa, this maxim captures the essence and the ethics of the African cultural competence, '*ubuntu*'. As Makalela (2016) explains, ubuntu foregrounds confluence and interconnectedness by recognising the necessity of engaging with others to thrive. Predating any influences of globalised human rights discourses, ubuntu draws on the ancient past in order to spearhead change and innovation in the present and future. Makalela (2016), for example, has applied ubuntu to his innovative pedagogical framework aimed at amplifying children’s multiple languages in South African school settings, using ‘ubuntu translanguaging’ (p. 191). It is further noteworthy how the spirit of ubuntu has permeated other contexts given its strong emphasis on unity and collective action, even being adopted as their rallying motto by some sports teams around the world (Reichenberg, 2018).

Reflecting the emphasis inherent in ubuntu on harnessing connections, the chapters in this volume collectively contribute to a gradual—work-in-progress—departure from the long-standing focus on applied linguistics and second language acquisition as the main research areas (see e.g., Anderson, 2022) which underpin early English language learning. The unique characteristics of children as language learners are too frequently eclipsed when research from these fields firmly dictates the pedagogical content and the shaping of teacher education programmes. This leads to a lacuna in provision as adults’ and (to a lesser extent) teenagers’ language learning needs have been unevenly prioritised. To address this situation and to make connections to the past in order to innovate in the present, this book intends to balance the tendency towards a strongly linguistic focus with those philosophies of learning which centre the child, such as Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Steiner, and Froebel. All of these are grounded in experiential learning and strive to foster child-friendly, relationship-orientated English language classroom environments.

In shining a brighter light on children aged three to twelve as English language learners, and in interconnecting their diverse needs, wants and motivations, the contributors to this volume help to further the wider goal of exploring the rich, complex, and demanding nature of implementing pedagogies and crafting teacher education programmes for this highly varied age span (Jin & Cortazzi, 2019; Rich, 2019). As Nayr Ibrahim eloquently captured during her opening plenary address at the 2022 IATEFL Belfast Conference, there is a major need to transcend the current state of the art. By intertwining three evocative metaphors, Ibrahim (2022) maintained,

> Here we are at a train station, a crossroads in early language learning, and at this station there is a sofa – the comfy, functional, well-designed, well-researched sofa of English as a Foreign Language, Second Language Acquisition, Communicative Language Teaching, Task Based Learning and Teaching and Intercultural

Communicative Competence. All key terms and concepts in foreign language research and teaching that have stood the test of time and contributed to a better understanding of how best to teach foreign languages *to adults*. This sofa has had to accommodate every kind of stakeholder in foreign language learning – the adult learner, the SLA researchers, the policy makers, the teacher trainers, the assessment organisations, the materials creators and publishers and hidden behind the sofa were the *children*, *their teachers* and *teacher educators*.

Attempting to respond to Ibrahim's (2022) call to action by centring children as English language learners, their teachers and the educators of these teachers, ten research-informed principles can be identified which underpin the innovative practices focused on in this book. Confluence can be further witnessed here when demonstrating the vibrancy of the early English language education field:

1. Prioritising the age-related differences which significantly influence the ways children learn additional languages (Jin & Cortazzi, 2019; Muñoz & Spada, 2019; Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017)

2. Recognising the diverse emotional, linguistic, cognitive and conceptual maturity children bring to learning English (Kolb & Schocker, 2021; Shin et al., 2021)

3. Commencing instruction with what children already know and appealing to their desire to be active, social participants in the classroom (Ellis & Ibrahim, 2021; Pinter, 2017; Shin et al., 2021)

4. Providing explicit support as children learn how to learn and developing cognitive and metacognitive strategies which enable children to build their own English language learning toolkits (Ellis & Ibrahim, 2015)

5. Establishing positive relationships with children learning English and promoting safe, stimulating classroom environments (Ellis & Ibrahim, 2015; Delaney, 2016; Mourão & Ellis, 2020; Pinter 2017)

6. Teaching the whole child using holistic approaches to learning where the various linguistic elements of English are integrated into meaningful, engaging tasks and activities (Kolb & Schocker, 2021; Mourão & Ellis, 2020; Read, 2022)
7. Balancing the scaffolding to simultaneously support and challenge diverse groups of children learning English and motivating them while appealing to their curiosity (Gibbons, 2015)
8. Taking seriously the awareness that children are still learning their other languages and drawing on these languages as valuable pedagogical resources for English development (Krulatz et al., 2022)
9. Embracing children's love of make-believe, fantasy and imagined worlds, and making principled use of the significant potential of children's literature (Bland, 2019; Bourke, 2006; Mourão, 2016)
10. Embedding English language teachers' wider remit as *educators* of children systematically in teacher education at both pre- and in-service levels (Byram & Wagner, 2018; Ellis & Ibrahim, 2021)

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1 Characteristics of Innovative Practices

The book refracts the above ten principles through an innovative practices lens in order to provide support in particular for classroom practitioners as well as teacher educators. This draws on Wedell's (2022) renewed consideration of 'innovation', specifically as a concept in English language teaching (ELT). He indicates that research in recent decades has been dominated by concerns related to large-scale curriculum reform, especially in national education systems, instigated in a top-down manner by ministries of education. In contrast, Wedell (2022) advocates for pivoting towards a more contemporary perspective on innovation, one which can be considered to align with an ubuntu style ethos, and which makes close connections to general education (as captured in the educational philosophies highlighted previously). Recognising the crucial need to centre children, teachers and teacher educators when embarking on innovative practices at the school level, Wedell (2022) proposes, 'Taking a system-wide and experiential approach, [which] explores relationships between implementers' (teachers, school leaders, teacher educators, educational administrators') *lived experiences* of the implementation process and the extent to which desired changes are seen in classrooms' (p. 274).

Through embodying a *lived experiences* approach to innovation, the fourteen chapters comprising this book are congruent with the characteristics of innovative pedagogical practices identified by Grassick and Wedell (2018, p. 250). These necessitate significant changes to views of knowledge: shifting from an emphasis on 'conserving' towards 'extending'. Fresh pedagogical approaches to children's language learning are likewise, ushered in, marked by scaffolding speculative exploration and discovery learning, thus distancing from those practices favouring information reproduction. According to this conceptualisation, the teacher's role becomes increasingly facilitative, enabling and advisory. Finally, at the teaching strategy level, experimentation is prioritised over imitation and memorisation. In translating these overarching principles into practical realities, a framework for innovative practices in early English language education is provided in Fig. 1.1. This in turn acts as an enveloping of the body of work represented in the book's chapters and is an adaptation of the research insights shared by Grassick and Wedell (2018, pp. 251–260) when focusing on innovations in school settings in diverse global contexts.

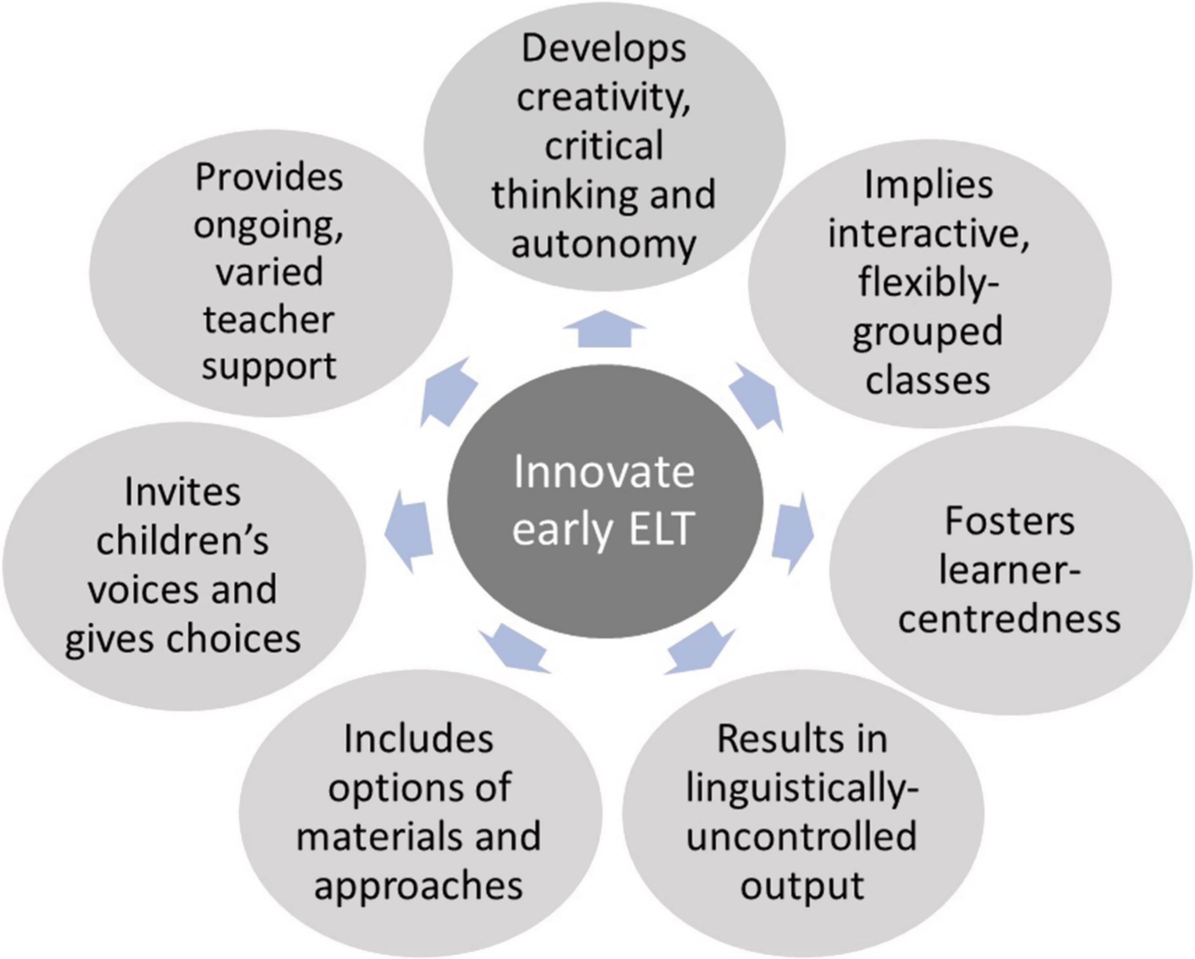
Develops creativity, critical thinking and autonomy
Implies interactive, flexibly-grouped classes
Fosters learner-centredness
Results in linguistically-uncontrolled output
Includes options of materials and approaches
Invites children's voices and gives choices
Provides ongoing, varied teacher support
Innovate early ELT

Fig. 1.1 Characteristics of innovative practices in the volume

2 Structure of the Book

The contents are organised into two main parts. The first, *Innovative Practices in Early English Education*, focuses on pedagogical innovations within classroom practice, curriculum development, and child-centred assessment domains. While the scope cannot cover all aspects of early English language education due to limitations of space, chapter selection has been guided by a desire to explore areas which have either received insufficient attention in the literature and/or those which have been reimagined by their authors through an invigorating lens. The second part, *Innovative Practices in Early English Teacher Education*, explores a selection of innovations in initial and/or in-service teacher education contexts, particularly focused on lesser-known areas and/or those underexplored in the literature. The characteristics in Fig. 1.1 are infused to a greater or lesser extent throughout the book depending on each chapter's foci.

Cognisant of the significant variation which exists worldwide in national education systems and out-of-school English language learning settings (Ellis, 2014), the authors have clarified the children's ages referred to by the terms 'early years', 'lower primary' and 'upper primary' as relevant to their chapter framing. And to concretely reconcile the prevailing theory–practice divide in English language education, the format of the chapters presents a synthesis of key research-related issues which leads to a practical showcase applying the insights emerging from the issues sections. Where authors share newly crafted pedagogical models, these remain flexible to enable teachers and teacher educators to experiment with and, subsequently, refine these according to their own specific contextual needs.

In Chap. 2, Littlejohn highlights the interconnectedness between general education and children's language learning, situating the latter at the heart of the former. By highlighting the disconnects between pedagogies informed by second language acquisition theories and the realities for children learning English, flexible principles for bridging the divide are provided. Lagerwaard then seeks to cater for learner voice and choice in Chap. 3, focusing on upper-primary-aged learners and their creative meaning-making in English. He shares a flexible pedagogical framework for empowering learners, informed by his empirical research and adaptable for a range of contexts.

The following two chapters prioritise children's diverse cultural and linguistic identities. In Chap. 4, Read explores how the development of intercultural competence has been overly abstract and insufficiently framed in early language learning. By addressing ways to explore interculturality with children in English lessons, her creative and scaffolded model makes incremental connections to their worlds and the wider world. This is followed by Shi's chapter, which constitutes a research-informed account that underscores the importance of valuing children's linguistic repertoires in the early years. She shares the potential of using several complementary, age-relevant strategies based on a strong version of translanguaging.

The next three chapters turn to the increasing importance of enabling children learning English to navigate an increasingly multimodal world and how this requires an enhanced focus in their lessons (Lim et al., 2022). In

Chap. 6, Shin unpacks the rationales for developing primary-aged children's visual literacy at school and accompanies this with a useful set of pedagogical principles which are gently cumulative, leading children towards a more critical reading of the images they encounter during English lessons and beyond. This is followed by Neokleous's focus on the development of children's digital literacies in Chap. 7, in which he makes a compelling case for moving beyond the ubiquitous dominance of technological tools in English language education. In doing so, he shares a principled framework for the enhancement of upper-primary learners' digital awareness and resilience. In Chap. 8, Ellis and Gruenbaum explore the potential of integrating picturebooks in English language education, and while this may appear familiar terrain, they imaginatively refract the use of video recordings of picturebook read-alouds through e-pedagogies, thereby offering increased global access to authentic children's literature, decentring picturebook use from Europe and affording linguistic and wider educational benefits for children worldwide.

Part I is completed by two important contributions which share research-informed insights into the emerging role of formative assessment for teachers and children learning English. Despite the prevailing influence of summative assessment practices in English language learning, Rixon's chapter demonstrates the far-reaching possibilities for incorporating more informal, child-friendly opportunities for assessment that provide learners with a clear sense of progress. In Chap. 10, Butler explores self-assessment, offering a synthesis of its transformative role for creating opportunities for learning; thus, questioning the narrower understanding of testing which can have a detrimental effect on young children. Both authors recognise the complexities involved when innovating within assessment and as such, offer practical proposals.

Part II shifts attention to teacher education, opening with Waddington's chapter on an innovative approach to pre-service early years English teacher education at the university level. Like Littlejohn's chapter at the outset of Part I, Waddington addresses the confluence between general education and language education and recognises the challenges as well as the mutually enriching opportunities of drawing on research insights from both domains. The practical schemes of work accompanying the chapter offer a flexible blueprint for others in similar pre-service contexts.

A variety of connections can be made to Read's and Shi's chapters in Part I in the following two chapters by Ibrahim and Valente, respectively. In Chap. 12, Ibrahim recognises that in order to create conditions where Shi's strong model of translanguaging can become commonplace, early years and primary English language teachers require teacher education which mainstreams multilingual practices. The vignettes from her own teacher education context as well as the creative, arts-based principles she proposes make a transformative case for 'demonolingualising' the field. Linked to Read's focus on intercultural learning, Valente's chapter explores the ways in which carefully selected and skilfully mediated picturebooks can equip teachers with a resource for developing children's interculturality. He suggests experiential, collaborative and dialogic approaches for embedding picturebooks during in-service teacher education for developing interculturality and citizenship awareness.

In Chap. 14, Lim, Renandya and Kaur demonstrate how in order to strengthen the classroom focus on children's metacognitive awareness and related skills, it needs to become a central part of the practicum in pre-service teacher education. They share opportunities from their own teacher education context for ensuring that metacognition occupies a central position in equipping teachers with strategies for enabling children's capacity for learning *how* to learn. Completing Part II is a chapter by Myrset and McConaghy which transcends the familiar focus on expanding teachers' grammatical, lexical and phonological repertoires and instead, demonstrates the importance of pragmatic competence. The chapter's goal is to help teachers to enable children to function in actual communication and embrace English lessons characterised by more meaningful, linguistic output.

In concluding, a return to Ibrahim's (2022) seminal plenary referred to earlier is warranted. The book intends to make a small, yet nevertheless significant contribution to disrupting the dependence on adult-orientated English language teaching practices by, instead, reorientating, connecting and celebrating the world of the child. As Ibrahim (2022) powerfully asserts,

> Learning is messy: it is erratic, recursive, spiralling, simultaneous, non-linear, complex, occasionally plateauing, and then peaking. Children, in this messiness, need colour, art, movement, music,

> nature. So, stop testing them – use observation and reflection techniques. Stop sitting them at desks – get rid of desks in rows. Stop monolingualising them – use translanguaging approaches. Stop SLAing them – look to the general education curriculum for inspiration and child language development. Stop adultifying early language learning – use experiential and self-directed learning. Stop CLILifying – integrate the English language into children’s lived realities.

It is therefore hoped that these fourteen chapters make more of a start, rather than a stop, when innovating early English language educational practices for teacher educators, teachers and most importantly, for the children we aim to educate.

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Part I
Innovative Practices in Early English Education

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2. Integrating Language Learning into Education in the Primary English Classroom

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1 Introduction

There is an old joke, which I have heard many times, in many different countries and cultures, but which always repeats the same established prejudices. In this joke, a member of a deemed socially superior group (such as educated city people) is walking in the countryside and stops a member of a deemed socially inferior group (such as uneducated country dwellers) and asks the best way to get to some far-off place. '*Well,*' is the reply, '*if you want to get there, I wouldn't start from here, if I were you!*' The joke plays, of course, upon the assumed dim-wittedness of the person replying. Yet, there is a double play here, for in the reply the 'wise fool' has actually pointed out that it is the questioner who is foolish in coming so far away from their chosen destination, and in entirely the wrong direction.

There is something of this in my focus in this chapter, for it rests upon a view that in English language teaching for primary school children (here, meaning those aged 5–12, in a school setting), we have come so far out of the way in our thinking about an appropriate language curriculum that we probably cannot get to where we want to go from here. We will have to move to another point of departure and start again. It is this new point of departure which I wish to explore, by setting out some now well-established principles from educational writings, and by applying these to language teaching in the context of primary schools. But before we look at the possible journey ahead, I need to show why I believe ‘we can’t start from here’.

2 Current Issues and Research

Mainstream Approaches in the Primary English Classroom

Perhaps one of the most unfortunate aspects of the biography of teaching English in primary schools is that, like a younger sibling, it has frequently received ‘hand-me-downs’ from its older, more well-established, elders. Historically, modern foreign language teaching was first targeted at adults and then extended into secondary schools. As the account by Howatt and Smith (2014) details, much of the history of British and European language teaching has taken place against the backdrop of an unshaken adherence to grammar as the main organizing principle for the selection and sequence of content. Initially drawing on the teaching of classical languages, foreign language teachers began by trying ‘to emulate the classics in the design of their teaching materials: the familiar pattern of grammar rules in the mother-tongue being followed by paradigms and vocabulary lists with an emphasis on exceptions’ (Howatt & Smith, 2014, p. 80). Subsequent methodological developments, in particular behaviourist approaches (e.g., Fries & Fries, 1961) which emphasised language as habit building, did not depart from grammar as the guiding basis. Interestingly, even the emergence of communicative language teaching (CLT) in the 1970s/1980s, at least in its ‘weak’ variety, often simply mapped language functions on to a grammar syllabus, preserving the progression familiar to teachers. Later developments, such as Krashen-inspired subconscious acquisition methodologies (e.g., Krashen & Terrell, 1983), and task-based methodologies, that also promise subconscious acquisition but through interaction (e.g., Ellis, 2003), have in the main failed to shift mainstream language teaching away from its grammar foundation. The well-established but heavily criticised PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) framework still dominates most language teaching worldwide, as many successive surveys of coursebooks have shown (e.g., Littlejohn, 1992; Masuhara et al., 2008; Nitta & Gardner, 2005; Tomlinson et al., 2001; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013). Although PPP has its origins in the early development of CLT (Anderson, 2017), it has freely incorporated much of the behaviourist legacy of language teaching in many of the exercise types for controlled practice, such as drills, listen and repeat, substitution tables, and patterned dialogues.

With this 'hand-me-down' history that mainstream primary school English language teaching has inherited, it is not surprising that it continues to reflect the same underlying view as found in approaches for older learners: a conceptualisation of language learning as being mainly about *learning language*. Garton et al. (2013, p. 12), in their study of global English language teaching practices, found, for example, that the most common activities in primary school English language classrooms included repeating after the teacher, reading out loud, filling gaps, memorising words, and grammar exercises. In this, language aims are most usually addressed implicitly through the language to which learners are exposed, although, as Copland et al. (2014) remark, it is not uncommon to find teachers of children speaking about problems in explaining 'difficult grammar categories' (p. 749). This emphasis on *learning language* is most clearly evident in the divide that usually exists between learning content (i.e., aspects of the language) and carrier content (i.e., content used to exemplify and 'carry' the learning content, such as fictional dialogues) (Littlejohn, 1997, 2015a). The carrier may be chosen for a variety of reasons, such as its interest or entertainment value, in addition to how well it carries the language goal, but the assumption is that learners will probably forget the carrier, while hopefully retaining the language learning content.

Whilst the underlying learning content—the language syllabus—has remained largely unchanged in its transfer from older to younger learners, there is now, however, a clear recognition of the need for child-friendly topics and child-friendly classroom activities, such as games, songs, and craft activities in the carrier. Figure 2.1 shows an example of this, from a picture story in a recent coursebook produced by a mainstream UK publisher. Here we can see how the text has been created to exemplify the chosen learning content (the present continuous), with the carrier content pitched to appeal to the primary school learner through the focus on talking farmyard animals, babies and kittens, and a humorous ending.

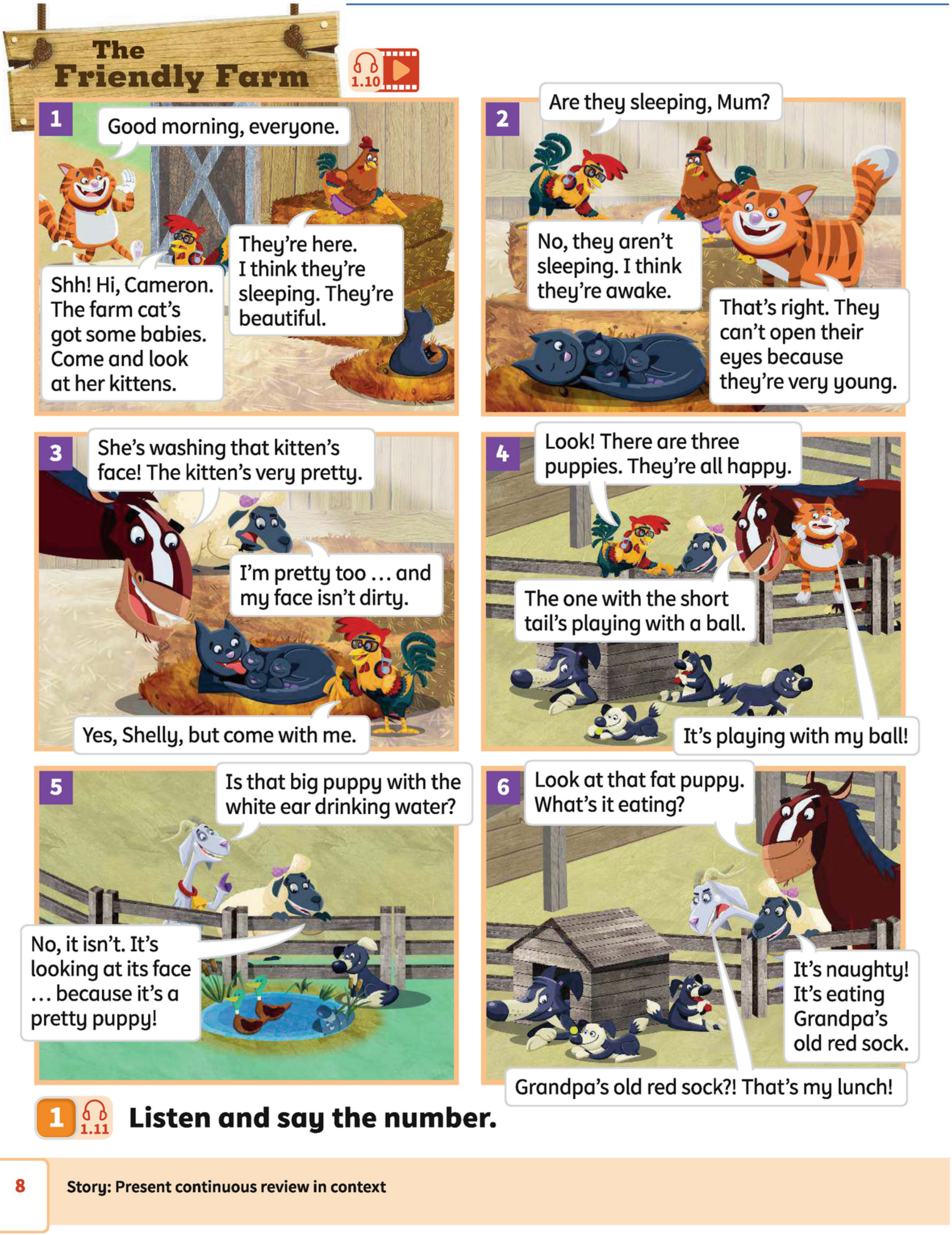
The Friendly Farm
1.10
1
Good morning, everyone.
Shh! Hi, Cameron. The farm cat's got some babies. Come and look at her kittens.
They're here. I think they're sleeping. They're beautiful.
2
Are they sleeping, Mum?
No, they aren't sleeping. I think they're awake.
That's right. They can't open their eyes because they're very young.
3
She's washing that kitten's face! The kitten's very pretty.
I'm pretty too … and my face isn't dirty.
Yes, Shelly, but come with me.
4
Look! There are three puppies. They're all happy.
The one with the short tail's playing with a ball.
It's playing with my ball!
5
Is that big puppy with the white ear drinking water?
No, it isn't. It's looking at its face … because it's a pretty puppy!
6
Look at that fat puppy. What's it eating?
It's naughty! It's eating Grandpa's old red sock.
Grandpa's old red sock?! That's my lunch!
1
1.11
Listen and say the number.
8
Story: Present continuous review in context

Fig. 2.1 Extract from Nixon and Tomlinson (2018, p. 8)

Perhaps an older learner, with of course different carrier content, could see how the various sentences in the extract are designed to exemplify the present continuous (as a caption beneath the story explains) and see the pedagogic purpose of the strange exchanges, but there is not much distance here between unnatural sentences like *Is that big puppy with the white ear drinking water?* or the reply *No, it isn't. It's looking at its face…because it's a pretty puppy!* and the infamous '*la plume de ma tante est sur la table*' type sentences from the grammar-translation books of old. In fairness to the authors, the pressures on coursebook writers to produce texts like these are considerable. As an experienced writer of English language teaching materials for primary schools, I know that the requirement to write in conformity with a linguistic syllabus and external examinations is often overwhelming and probably leads to reproducing the PPP format to ensure coverage of the required content.

I do not wish to debate the pros and cons of a PPP approach here, but merely note that research and theories of education tell us that all but those learners in the final years of primary education are simply unlikely to acquire language in an externally planned manner. For children, the acquisition of an L2 is likely to require the same conditions as L1 acquisition, a process which is largely subconscious, and which is based on interaction around messages and meaning (Dekeyser, 2003; Dekeyser et al., 2010; Ellis, 2009). The basis on which much primary school English language teaching is conceived is intended for another kind of learner, an older one, who can see language as an object to be learned, who understands what 'practice' is and what it is for. Given this, it is not surprising that current mainstream approaches to English language teaching in primary schools often produce disappointing results, with low achievement rates in many places in the world, and with few school systems able to achieve their intended standards (see, e.g., Barahona (2016) for an account of experiences in Chile; Erkan (2015) for an account from Turkey; and Baldauf et al. (2011) for an analysis of success and failure in the Asia-Pacific region). Where there are better rates of success this is often coupled with other factors such as caregivers' English language abilities and higher socio-economic status, and English being widespread in the local community (Hayes, 2014), suggesting that provision in the school is otherwise not achieving its purpose. Not only does this lead us to seriously question the drive to an early start in English with current approaches, but a methodology which seeks to maintain enjoyment as a means of carrying a language syllabus can create significant difficulties with disappointed expectations when children transition to secondary education and encounter a more academic and challenging approach (Courtney, 2017).

There is, however, a further problem here. Approaches which prioritise language itself have placed English language teaching on the margins of educational thinking, relying on a myth inspired by second language acquisition studies that the plasticity of the young child's brain means that English language teaching for children is an effortless process requiring little real teaching skills (Bland, 2019). The result is that English language teaching in primary schools draws almost exclusively on a literature concerned with language analysis, to inform the content of the syllabus, and with the variety of possible classroom methods or activities tempered, perhaps, with practical knowledge of what appears 'to work' with children. Although there are some notable exceptions (e.g., Moon, 2005), a glance at some of the many texts for training teachers to teach children confirms this through their typical chapter divisions which show how language teaching is conceived of as teaching grammar, vocabulary, and each of the 'four skills' of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, with additional sections on such topics as classroom management and lesson planning (e.g., Linse & Nunan, 2005; Nunan, 2011; and online courses such as the Cambridge *CELT-Primary* course, the *International House Online Course in Teaching Young Learners and Teenagers*, and the Oxford University Press course *Teaching English to Young Learners*). Such an approach omits the fact that, for children, English language learning is part of their developing experience, and actually takes place in the context of their education, and probably in an institution which has education in the broadest sense as its overarching remit. We need to think not only about language development but also about how the actual process of teaching and learning—our methodology—contributes to the educational experience of children. A focus on *learning language*, coupled with a good dose of enjoyable activities, seems unlikely to offer that. In other words, if we want to position English language learning as a contributor to educational growth, we cannot start from here. We will need to move to a different place.

Learning as a Social Experience

The starting point that I wish to offer here is one which derives from a perspective on teaching at the centre of debate in current educational thinking. Loosely known as social constructivism, this shifts the emphasis away from the content being taught and more towards the nature of the social experience of learning. It offers a refreshing, alternative view which has significant implications for primary English language teaching, as I will show. To do so, however, I first need to set out some key features of a social constructivist perspective on the nature of knowledge and learning, sources of engagement and motivation, and the role of learners in their learning.

From a social constructivist perspective, knowledge is never something that is simply delivered to a learner, but something which is *constructed* and *co-constructed* in interaction with others, inside the learner's own head (Vygotsky, 1962). Fundamental to this view is the idea that learning is always an act of negotiation between what the learner already knows and what is new to the learner, such that new knowledge and experiences can only make sense if they are related to previous knowledge and experiences. The starting point for learning is always this negotiation inside the learner's head, even if the teacher endeavours to adopt a transmission approach in teaching. From a constructivist point of view, therefore, the key to effective teaching is to enable and support this negotiation between known and new by enabling it to happen explicitly, through guiding experiences and discussion (Bruner, 1978; Mercer & Littleton, 2007). The learner's role is thus not one of simply receiving teacher delivered content, but one of interacting with ideas. Interaction in this view refers to a deeper level of engagement than learners simply working together in pairs or groups. In the primary school classroom, some writers have advanced the concept of 'dialogic teaching' as an approach to bring about this deeper level of engagement. According to Alexander (2008, 2020), one of the most prominent advocates of this approach, dialogic teaching aims to engage learners in exploratory talk in which the teacher asks learners to share their thinking, compare with what others have said, and verbalise things that are unclear to them, not to test their knowledge, but to support them in relating new ideas to what they already know. The classroom is thus seen as a community, and as a highly interactive space, in which ideas are explored and generated. Learners are seen, not as consumers of knowledge and ideas, delivered by the teacher, but as producers.

This social, contextual view of the classroom also extends to sources of learners' motivation in learning English. Traditionally, teachers have emphasised instrumental motivations, such as getting a job. Such a view is unlikely to have much relevance to primary school children who are naturally more concerned with the 'here and now' of the classroom, rather than the 'there and then' of some future situation. Perhaps recognising this, primary school teachers frequently place great store on providing extrinsic motivation, through such things as gold stars for good work, and on intrinsic motivation, through such things as the already mentioned 'fun' activities. A significant problem with extrinsic sources of motivation, however, is that rewards only work if learners believe there is a strong likelihood that they will get them. If a learner's work consistently does not merit a gold star, then they are unlikely to continue struggling to get one. There is also an additional problem in that a rewards system directs learners' attention to the reward and not the learning itself, making sustained interest in learning difficult when there is no reward available (Deci et al., 1999; Oga-Baldwin et al., 2017). Similarly, attempts at stimulating intrinsic motivation through enjoyable classroom activities may only have limited success in that they raise children's expectations of 'having fun' in the classroom, and direct attention away from satisfaction in learning. The effect of a fun activity is usually only temporary, offering no sustainable engagement or interest once the fun is over and normal class work resumes.

In contrast to distanced and temporary sources of motivation and engagement, a social constructivist perspective instead emphasises the importance of the immediate context and, in particular, the classroom roles which are implied by the structure of teaching and learning. A number of factors have been identified in this, including the locus of control (Hsieh, 2012), a sense of value and purpose (Williams, 1998), and self-esteem and feelings of success (Ushioda, 2012). Locus of control relates to the idea that where learners feel they have more control over what they are doing, they are more likely to feel engaged (Hsieh, 2012). A sense of value and purpose in what they are learning is seen as vital to sustained engagement because, without that, mere surface compliance is likely to result, in which the learner simply ensures that they are seen to do the work required, rather than actually engage with it (what Nystrand & Gamaron (1991) termed *procedural*, rather than *substantive* engagement). The concepts of self-esteem and of feelings of success in learning are extremely important for primary school children in particular. Much of what happens in classrooms can be explained by reference to a human desire to save face and to avoid feelings of failure (Williams et al., 2016). It is this desire that may explain why some children consistently choose to sit at the back of the classroom, where they think they may not be noticed or adopt a 'not interested' avoidance behaviour as a way of distancing the impact of failure (Fisher, 2005). This perspective on motivation thus emphasises the importance, once again, of viewing the classroom as a community in which feelings of success must be created, and in which inclusion of all is actively pursued (Tadayyon et al., 2016).

Viewed through a social constructivist perspective, the work of the teacher is thus very different from how it has been traditionally seen in English language teaching, and it implies very different classroom roles for all concerned. I have already referred to a shift from a role of the learner as a consumer of presented knowledge and ideas towards a role as producer. At stake here is an answer to a fundamental question: What kind of learner do we want to emerge from primary school learning? A strong, defined answer to this question has been offered by the designers of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP):

> The PYP curriculum framework begins with the premise that PYP students are agents of their own learning and partners in the learning process. The PYP curriculum recognizes learners' innate potential to inquire, question, wonder and theorize about themselves, others, and the world around them. When learning communities recognize children's emergent identities and competencies, they create an educational context that values children both for who they were, who they are in the present and who they will become in the future. In building from prior learning and experiences, PYP learners are uniquely placed to co-create their current learning needs. (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2021)

It is not difficult to see the influence of social constructivist thinking here, with the recognition that PYP learners are 'agents of their own learning and partners in the learning process' and that they can 'co-create their current learning needs'. Here, the learner is viewed as someone who can ‘inquire, question, wonder and theorize’ about the world and take action, locally or globally. The significance of images of self-esteem and self-confidence are also strongly reflected here, with the concern for ‘children’s emergent identities and competencies’ and the implication this may have for their personal future. There is much in this statement which may cause all primary school teachers, of all disciplines, to pause and consider how far these aspects are reflected in their own classrooms. For English language teachers, in particular, concerned with covering a pre-planned language syllabus, there is also much which will present a major challenge. This statement stands in stark contrast to a transmission view of language teaching. It also stands in stark contrast with English language teaching methodologies which emphasise learners’ passive, subconscious absorption of language whilst engaged in enjoyable activities or other tasks. We are therefore left with a powerful question: How can primary school English teachers meet wider educational aims, such as those set out in the IBO PYP, and realise the significance of a social constructivist perspective, whilst still meeting the language teaching objectives placed upon them?

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3 Practical Applications: Social Constructivism and the Primary English Classroom

There are clearly many different possible implications if we take a social constructivist, educational perspective on English language teaching. This takes us right back to the age-old discussion about ends and means: What are the most effective classroom means to achieve the hoped for ends? Mainstream English language teaching has offered a reply to this question which emphasises means to achieve specified learning goals through a palette of exercise types such as drills, comprehension work, oral practice, games and so on. A widened set of objectives, however, will require a much broader range of methodological choices to supplement the existing repertoire. In this last section of the chapter, therefore, I want to set out some principles for course design, derived from my own experience with primary school English teachers and children and with materials development, and inspired by my understanding of what constructivist approaches to primary English teaching can look like. Some of these principles will chime with recent developments in the English language teaching literature, but my aim here is to offer them as a coherent educationally motivated framework. With these principles in mind, I will then offer some practical examples of classroom work.

Principles for Course Design

Principle 1: Classroom Content Has Educational Value

Earlier in this chapter, I made a distinction between learning content (such as vocabulary items or grammar) and carrier content (such as the farmyard dialogue in the example extract) which is used to ‘carry’ the learning content. A social constructivist perspective emphasises the importance of a sense of value and purpose in all aspects of English language learning. Whilst enjoyable fictional texts, games and songs may have a temporary motivating force in getting primary school learners’ attention, for sustained motivation we need content that is seen by the children as having significance and which provides educational value. We need, therefore, to choose content that is not only interesting, but which has learning value in itself, beyond simply the language it exemplifies. In the context of the primary school, the most obvious, natural and justifiable source of content is the primary school curriculum, and the topics and themes which it covers, as has been exploited in CLIL approaches (Ellison, 2018). In this case, the notion of disposable carrier content thus becomes redundant.

Principle 2: Classroom Activities Have Educational Value

Principle 2 extends the need for educational value to classroom methodology. This means that the way that learners work with content should have benefit in relation to wider educational objectives. For example, tasks and activities should have value in developing cognitive abilities (such as requiring learners to analyse and hypothesise) or social skills such as working effectively with others, and providing guidance to peers. The conventional stock of English language teaching task types, such as listen and repeat, read and answer, and complete the sentence may have little value in this respect, emphasising as they do ‘lower order thinking skills’ of recall, semantic understanding, and application of rules, in Bloom’s well-known taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

Principle 3: Meaning and Content are the Central Focus of Classroom Work

A shift away from a language syllabus as the driver of classroom work, towards the content and methodology of the full curriculum, as mentioned in Principles 1 and 2, will necessarily imply an emphasis on the meaning of language. The learning of form is however important and should not be ignored, as later stages in schooling (and life) are likely to require accuracy. Form, however, needs to be the servant of meaning so that language is taught as it is required by the theme or topic, not because it exists as the next item in a language syllabus. Earlier, I mentioned the distinction between ends and means. In primary school English language learning, the end needs to be the ability to use language to express and understand ideas, particularly those derived from the curriculum. Language form is thus best viewed as means towards achieving that end, not as an end in itself. This gains added weight when we consider the evidence from child language studies, mentioned earlier, which shows how children acquire language through meaning, and not in any externally determined sequence. As Cameron (2001) argues, this underlines the importance of a thematic organisation for course design in the primary English classroom, which will provide opportunities for 'realistic and motivating uses of the language with meaning and purpose' (p. 82).

Principle 4: The Child's L1 Is a Resource for Learning

Social constructivist perspectives emphasise that learning is always an act of negotiation between what the learner already knows and what is new. In the context of primary school English language learning, this suggests that the learner's L1(s) (here and elsewhere, taken to also refer to the predominant language of instruction) should be actively involved in the English language classroom, in a planned and strategic way. For beginner level learners, for example, this may mean that they are encouraged to share ideas first in their L1s and then helped to express those ideas in English. It also suggests that when they meet new or unfamiliar language, they are asked to compare with their own language. Translation, in this case, becomes an active feature of the classroom, but always as a means of supporting learners in expressing their ideas in English.

Principle 5: Learners Are Involved in Classroom Decision-Making

The idea of learners as ‘partners in the learning process’ mentioned in the PYP description earlier, suggests an active role for learners in making decisions in the classroom and a shift in the locus of control away from the teacher. In practical terms, this could involve learners in selecting topics to focus on, the selection, design and sequencing of activities, and the creation of assessment tasks, depending on the possibilities offered by their level of maturity. As the PYP statement suggests, sharing classroom decisions with learners implies a role as co-creators of their learning. An excellent example of this in action has been provided by Nikolov (2000), who provides a rich illustration of many years of experience of sharing classroom decisions with primary school children.

Principle 6: Classroom Work Is Highly Interactive

To a great extent, Principle 6 will naturally result from an application of Principles 1–5, to produce a highly interactive classroom. The principle is worth stating in its own right, however, as it sets out a need to ensure that learners are engaged in interacting not only with each other in pairs and groups but with ideas, in an exploratory manner, whether they originate from other learners, the teacher or from texts and media. The interactive classroom according to this perspective is one in which learners are engaged with ideas, and where they ‘inquire, question, wonder and theorize’, to quote once again the IBO PYP statement.

Principle 7: Classroom Work Is Inclusive

The term ‘inclusive’ means that participation and a sense of success and achievement should be available to all. The value of this lies not only, as explained earlier, in relation to the psychology of motivation in which feelings of success are themselves motivating, but also in relation to the development of feelings of self-esteem and competence so vital to a child’s personal development. A key concept in this is the notion of differentiation. Often, this is interpreted as the design of tasks for supposed different levels of ability, which are allocated to different groups of learners. Such approaches, however, run the risk of being self-fulfilling prophecies as learners come to see themselves as ‘weak’, ‘average’ or ‘high-achievers’, and therefore adjust their aspirations and effort accordingly. The concept of inclusiveness, in contrast, suggests that it is not tasks which should be differentiated, but rather the level of support. Support needs to be made available to all learners simultaneously, for them to utilise as they need, guided by the teachers' encouragement to first simply try. For example, the provision of bilingual word lists, translation of the main ideas in a reading text into L1(s), sentence starters, and answer keys can be made available to everyone, so that all learners are working on the same task and towards the same goal, drawing on different amounts of support as needed.

Principle 8: Classroom Work Is Age Appropriate

Principle 8 can be interpreted as introducing a word of caution in the application of Principles 1–7. It is important that any movement towards, for example, shared decision-making or learner designed activities is appropriate to the children's cognitive and social development. I have already remarked, for instance, that English language work which requires learners to work with explicitly stated rules of grammar are likely to be inappropriate to all but the oldest learners in the primary-school-age range. We can expect similar limitations in social abilities, such as how well they can work in a team, cooperate with others, give guidance and feedback to peers, and participate in public. Nikolov (2000) records some interesting examples of this and how gender and maturity appear to come into play as learners grow older.

Examples of Principles in Practice

In this section, I will set out some examples of how the eight principles can be collectively reflected in classroom work. Two examples relate to the overall organisation of teaching and learning, while two further examples describe specific task types. Further examples of educational approaches to classroom work at primary school level are available in Littlejohn (2015a, b, 2016a, b).

Example 1: Content and Methods from Across the Curriculum, Integrating L1s

As a direct alternative to content which only serves as a carrier for language goals, Littlejohn and Schofield (2005) show how topics can be taken from the existing primary school curriculum, and integrated into the teaching of English, in such a way that first language and English language abilities are addressed simultaneously with wider educational goals. The approach taken is in contrast to established versions of Content and Language Integrated

Learning (e.g., Coyle, 2010) in that a topic (such as plants, food or animals) may be first explored by the class in the L1, then expanded in the English language classes, before it is returned to once again in the L1. In this case, knowledge of a topic gained in the L1 can support understanding in English, and knowledge gained in the English stage can support further topic development when it returns to the L1 stage. This weaving in and out of languages whilst simultaneously addressing the educational objectives of the curriculum shows how at each stage the learners' prior knowledge and experience becomes the basis for subsequent stages, reflecting many of the principles for course design set out above.

Example 2: Learner Plans

Some years ago, I had the pleasure of witnessing a highly inventive teacher working with a class of children aged around 7–8. Speaking predominantly in English, but glossing in the L1, the teacher was leading the children through the curriculum topic of 'towns'. In the class I witnessed, she showed the children four shopping bags from local supermarkets, and presented them with a challenge: How can we find out which supermarket has the best bags? In groups, the children then worked on developing a plan, first by deciding what 'best' meant (price? strength? design? reusability?) and then how they could collect data (ask people's opinions? do tests on strength, getting wet and so on?). As the children shared ideas, the teacher circulated to help them write about their plans in simple English, and then produce a timetable for each step in their research. The resulting feelings of ownership for their project and the opportunities for decision-making provided a strong motivator for engagement.

Similar opportunities for deeper levels of engagement also exist when children are given the responsibility for setting out plans for their learning, how they will use classroom time, and how they will record their progress in relation to the chosen theme. If the teacher offers careful support by supplying ideas or suggestions, and by asking children to reflect on whether they have used their time effectively, approaches such as these can change the structure of teaching and learning, and move the locus of control from the teacher towards the children.

Example 3: Question Posters

While Examples 1 and 2 provide an illustration of a broad approach to course design, question posters offer a concrete example of how this can be implemented in the classroom. In simple terms, the procedure is as follows. The teacher (or indeed the class) proposes a topic, such as ‘animals in the jungle’. The teacher then writes this topic inside a large circle on a poster paper and asks the class what they would like to know or find out. Initially, children usually volunteer questions in their L1s, which the teacher then recasts into English, and writes on the question poster. As more and more related questions come up, the teacher encourages the children to try to formulate their questions in English themselves, but provides help as needed so that everyone, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to add a question to the poster. Once sufficient questions have been generated, the teacher then sets the children the goal of finding answers to their questions by looking in books and on the Internet, as well as asking other teachers, parents/caregivers and friends over the coming days or weeks. As the children return with answers, the teacher helps them write their answer in English, and sticks it on the poster, with their name on it.

It is not difficult to see how a task type like this bridges many of the principles set out earlier. The task is inclusive as all may participate, regardless of their level of ability. It starts from the learners’ previous knowledge not only in relation to the topic but also in the way in which it moves from their L1s to English. It reveals rich educational content and engages the children in the development of many skills, such as researching, explaining succinctly, and approaching others. The task has value and purpose beyond simply English language learning goals.

Example 4: Cognitive Engagement in Language Work

Where classroom work needs to focus directly on English itself, educational aims related to cognitive development can be integrated into language work, as part of the overall topic or theme. For example, children can be asked to think like scientists and use Venn diagrams to create their own classification of items (e.g., different types of flowers) or to make a weather forecast, based on pictures and data about meteorological phenomena. They can be asked to think like historians and make deductions about how people lived in the past, based on pictures of discovered artefacts. Before reading a text, they can be asked to formulate their own questions which they can see if the text answers. Each of these examples requires a language-rich solution, not simply a one-word answer, and provides opportunities for negotiation of ideas with the class as a whole.

4 Conclusion

There will be little doubt that application of the principles set out in this chapter pose significant challenges. The realities of primary school classrooms around the world are daunting. In many places, primary school teachers are now being required to teach the curriculum in English, when they themselves have an uncertain command of the language. In other places, English teachers with little or no experience of the primary school curriculum are being required to teach young children. Yet, it is also important to recognise that the teaching of English in primary schools is literally in its infancy and, as a profession, we are still at the stage of determining its most appropriate nature. This will necessarily involve us in drawing on ideas from the field of education as a whole, and not, as the wise fool suggests, to start from where we currently are in English language teaching for older learners.

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3. Implementing Agency-Based Approaches in Upper-Primary English Language Education

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Keywords Learner agency – Self-regulated activity – Agency-based approach – Self-belief – Trust

1 Introduction

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020) and its *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2018), learners need to be actively involved in lessons to develop their capacity to meaningfully use the English language in an array of contexts. The framework states that this learning process involves the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of both general and in particular communicative competences. By enabling learners to express themselves in English within situated age-relevant contexts, they will not only activate and draw on their competences to achieve their communicative goals, but also develop these. Therefore, in order to facilitate learners' development of these, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (henceforth, CEFR) and its *Companion Volume* propose an action-oriented approach with the empowering vision of the learner 'as a "social agent", acting in the social world and exerting agency in the learning process' (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 28).

Despite the crucial role of agency to develop upper-primary learners' competences, there is no other reference, inclusion, or explanation of this concept and its application in the CEFR or its *Companion Volume*. Furthermore, although the CEFR and its *Companion Volume* have become an accepted benchmark for developing English language syllabuses around the world, they have been criticised for mainly focusing on adult language learners, thus rendering practical applications outwith the communicative needs of upper-primary learners and primary English language teaching (Parker & Valente, 2019). Nonetheless, the same authors state that if the *Companion Volume* is used in a principled way in teacher education and classroom practice, then a far more age-relevant focus on competency development can potentially be fostered.

Given the significance of agency set against the CEFR's default adult perspective, the potential of the *Companion Volume*, and the increased focus on agency in literature on children's language learning rights (see, e.g., Ellis & Ibrahim, 2021; Lundy, 2007), this chapter aims to better facilitate an understanding of agency. It has clear links to Lundy's (2007) application of Article 12 of the United Nations Rights of the Child, to language learning, usefully conceived in terms of space, voice, audience, and influence. According to Lundy, as language learners, children must be given opportunities to express a view, and they must be facilitated to do so in the classroom context. These views must be listened to, and fundamentally, be acted upon, as appropriate. The chapter further aims to illustrate how its inclusion in an action-oriented approach from a sociocultural perspective can empower upper-primary learners from ten to twelve years old to more competently use English through their agency in age-relevant contexts.

2 Current Issues and Research

Learner Agency

Learner agency is frequently theorised and analysed in the second language acquisition literature (Deters et al., 2014; Kalaja et al., 2015; Teng, 2019). In spite of such growing interest, finding a working definition is a challenge due to the fact that agency is a multifaceted hypothetical construct, and how it is conceptualised ‘has been the subject of numerous theoretical and philosophical debates’ (Teng, 2019, p. 68), which have led to distinct perspectives with diverse theoretical underpinnings (Huang & Benson, 2013). As a result of this ongoing discussion, most frameworks appear to agree that in relation to English language education, the following definitions underpin learner agency:

First, agency can be perceived as a contextually enacted way of expressing oneself. In other words, cultural aspects and social relationships within the communicative situation impact how learners express themselves in the foreign language (Van Lier, 2008). Secondly, this concept is frequently related to self-regulation, that is, when constructing their messages, learners not only use their knowledge about the foreign language, but also consider their context, emotions, motivations, and personal belief systems (Mercer, 2012). Thirdly, agency is often misinterpreted for autonomy; however, agency implies how learners decide to self-regulate their own activity by taking advantage of the autonomous role they have been assigned (Huang & Benson, 2013). Finally, agency is also frequently understood as willingness to communicate (Gao, 2010); nevertheless, it also enhances assigning one’s own significance and relevance to the conversation and deciding whether to either act or not in the foreign language (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). A volitional exercise of agency is nonetheless required for learners to develop their own identity in the foreign language (Huang, 2009). In other words, if learners do not take the initiative to express themselves in the target language during situated age-relevant communicative activities, such as talking to friends at school, they will not be able to discover and develop their unique voices in English.

Although this theoretical foundation is benchmarked mainly on secondary and adult language education, it has been variously applied by primary English language education scholars and researchers (see, e.g., Ellis & Ibrahim, 2015, 2021; Ellis & Rixon, 2019; Pinter & Kuchah, 2021) to focus on primary learners of English and their development of autonomy, suggesting that the following definition of agency is also suitable for upper-primary language education: *the capacity to consciously make emotionally influenced decisions on how to express yourself in relevant contexts*. The following unpacks the implications of this to facilitate a potential understanding of agency-based approaches for upper-primary language education:

Ahearn (2001) laid the foundation for the concept of agency in SLA research by defining it as ‘the socioculturally mediated capacity to act’ (p. 112). That is, the learner’s creations and interpretations in English are always influenced by cultures (of a country, city, neighbourhood, school, etc.) and pre-established social relations (such as a teacher, stranger, friend, etc.) of the interaction. For example, interacting with a teacher at school requires a different use of language than when interacting with a friend at a sports club. As situated language activities are constrained by these cultural and social conditions, there is a need to teach age-relevant ‘social languages’ for *relevant contexts.* ‘Each social language offers distinctive grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic resources that allow users to enact particular socially situated identities and to engage in specific socially situated activities’ (Johnson, 2009, p. 46).

The learner’s self-expression is not only influenced by social and cultural conditions, but also ‘appears to emerge from a series of multiple, interconnected causes which can interact in unpredictable ways and can vary in their relative significance’ (Mercer, 2012, p. 44). These causes have to do with how a learner experiences the communicative event (Veresov & Mok, 2018) and the feelings that a learner assigns to what happens in the classroom, such as surprise, boredom, or trust, are unique, and are what trigger them regarding how to behave (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). These *emotionally influenced decisions* can be observed in the upper-primary language classroom. For example, whereas some learners may find it exciting to engage in an online educational exchange on eTwinning with another learner, others may be reticent to speak as they find this overly daunting.

Agency is thus not only to be considered as carrying out intentional acts in the foreign language that result in a particular outcome (Gao, 2010), but also as *expressing yourself* ‘through deliberate non-participation or non-action’ (Mercer, 2012, p. 42). For example, a learner’s silence is not always necessarily a result of their inability to understand or express themselves in English, but can also be a deliberate decision due to a lack of interest in the lesson topic. This is because upper-primary learners develop formal-logical thought (Karpov, 2014), which enables them to *consciously* regulate their emotions, cognition, and self-beliefs before exerting their agency. First, learners are able through self-regulation ‘to modify emotions in terms of their quality, intensity, frequency, course, and expression’ (Holodynski, 2009, p.145). Secondly, learners self-regulate their interrelated knowledge (Arievitch, 2017) about the English language and how to use it in context. Finally, learners need to hold a belief that they are capable of expressing themselves (Bown, 2009). For example, when a child is angry at the teacher, they consider whether it is wise to express this rage, construct a message in English, and consider their confidence before speaking up.

Upper-primary learners are in the process of exploring how to make their own *decisions* in English. To achieve this, they need to be in control of their own learning in situated age-relevant contexts, such as meeting learners from another school during an online exchange. By being in charge of their own actions, learners discover how to competently express themselves in context in their own way. This designates autonomy as the enhancing factor of agency, as learners can only exert and develop their agency by virtue of it (Huang & Benson, 2013). For instance, if teachers during communicative activities merely focus on whether learners accurately produce what they would like to hear, such as pre-taught vocabulary or grammar, then learners are taken away from the freedom to decide how to paraphrase their own ideas, and consequently do not develop this capacity.

Conceptual Basis for Agency-Based Approaches

In line with the CEFR (2020) and its *Companion Volume* (2018), Stetsenko (2017) argues that the 'task of education is to work on developing learners' own agency as actors of social transformation by providing them with access to the tools that afford such agency' (p. 347). She suggests a reconsideration of teaching, and proposes the *contribution/daring* metaphor. This sociocultural metaphor underpins the conceptions for agency-based approaches, as applied in this chapter. It aims at enabling learners to acquire the power to make their own decisions on how to express themselves by contributing to social practices. However, as this metaphor underpins a wide range of teaching approaches, this conceptual foundation has been complemented with five key aspects related to SLA (Lagerwaard, 2021).

Johnson (2009) argues for language as a social practice perspective and accentuates that creating awareness on the contexts in which interactions take place are of crucial importance for learners, as it determines how English is used, what it means, and what is being achieved through it. Consequently, the role of the teacher becomes to enable upper-primary

English language learners in age-accessible ways to make their own choices on how to best access the linguistic and context-related knowledge they need to accomplish their own communicative goals in situated age-relevant practices. This could be, for example, asking another learner personally significant questions in an informal chatbox conversation during an online educational exchange.

Secondly, learners need opportunities to (re-)construct their knowledge about the English language and its use in context. By reflecting on the content, learners create tools for thinking (Arievitch, 2017), which strengthens their capacity to apply these through their agency when engaging in interactions. The inclusion of the learners' perspectives about situated English language use in pair and group work highlight their doubts and/or lack of knowledge. These can be discovered and taken over by learners to express themselves better in context (Johnson & Golombek, 2016).

Thirdly, by encouraging them to exercise their voice as learners in age-relevant emotionally charged contexts that include ethical and moral dilemmas such as cheating in English exams or bullying, upper-primary learners can freely look for ways to appropriately express themselves in English and consequently develop their agency. Apart from learners' communicative development, these 'emotionally charged situations or dramatic events, as everyday moments of children's directed activity, create the conditions for children to become more consciously aware of self and the environment' (Fleer, 2017, p. 86).

Fourthly, Swain (2013) highlights the importance of discovering as teachers how to connect and relate to learners. By coming to understand and anticipating the learners' emotional experiences and feelings through daily interaction and constructive feedback, a safety zone can potentially be created where they feel comfortable with taking risks. This genuine care and support can empower learners over time to confidently face their fears and make errors when speaking in English during lesson tasks and activities.

Finally, sufficient predictability, security, and structure for learners all need to be present in the classroom to afford children a sense of direction, as well as space (Lundy, 2007) to improvise and be confronted with doubts. Due to institutional constraints such as restrictive curricula, prescribed teaching methods and other rules or regulations, it can be challenging for teachers to handover agency to their learners (Ellis & Ibrahim, 2021). However, excessive emphasis on structure and order denies English language learners to fully express themselves and develop crucial agentive capacity and as such, this balance needs to be redressed (Mercer, 2011).

Pedagogical Principles for Agency-Based Approaches

This section applies the previous conceptual basis into five pedagogical principles that together aim at enabling upper-primary learners to volitionally express themselves through their agency: affordances, creative reconstruction, dialogic pedagogy, emotional dimension, and reflective action-oriented learning. These principles have been adapted from a doctoral study in the secondary classroom (Lagerwaard, 2021), owing to their suitability for upper-primary language education. This is because upper-primary learners are 'equipped with the cognitive ability that is necessary to exercise self-reflection' (Karpov, 2014, p. 110), which helps them to exert their agency and develop this ability. This makes the principles not only appropriate for the practical applications in this chapter; upper-primary teachers can further apply these to design their own agency-based activities. Although these informed principles will be addressed separately, they can appear at the same time or in combination with one another.

First, *reflective action-oriented learning* (Esteve et al., 2017) seeks to cognitively and communicatively orient learners before they express themselves in situated activities. This is achieved through a sequence of concatenated tasks which 'leads the learners from a text (or texts) provided to them at the onset of the sequence to another text to be created by them as they carry out specific conceptual work on various linguistic elements' (Esteve et al., 2017, pp. 5–6). By means of text comprehension and oral and written production tasks in the learners' own languages and English with collaborative reflections, they become aware of the communicative and contextual elements required, so they can appropriate them as convenient when interacting.

Secondly, the *emotional dimension* adopts two perspectives. On the one hand, it includes involving the learners' feelings during emotionally charged communicative tasks which include ethical and moral dilemmas to create awareness on how they would like to use the English language in agreement with their developing identities (Fleer, 2017). On the other hand, and most importantly, this dimension also takes into account emotions teachers bring to classroom interaction and the impact these have both on the learners' participation and their use of English (Johnson & Golombek, 2016).

Thirdly, *creative reconstruction* endeavours to make or re-construct the learners' knowledge relevant for their own communicative purposes. This starts with the learners' pre-understandings of the English language and its use in context, which is then guided by the tasks, collaborative practices, and the teacher's guidance to new understandings (Lantolf & Esteve, 2019) which they will use when expressing themselves in English.

Fourthly, *dialogic pedagogy* (Alexander, 2020) is a means of interacting through which learners can freely engage in any language during classroom conversations to question their knowledge. Although the teacher and learners address tasks together, it is the teacher who plans and steers this classroom talk with specific goals in view. Alternative viewpoints, questions, and doubts are exchanged and anticipated by all participants, who help each other to reach common understandings. The teacher endeavours to build on these ideas, with the intention to chain them into coherent lines of thinking for all.

Finally, *affordances* (Van Lier, 2007) are learning opportunities that emerge by enabling learners to express themselves in English. All the errors, doubts, and questions that arise can develop into reflections that lead to a more learner-aware manifestation of their agency.

Although not previously mentioned, *learner autonomy* forms an indispensable component as it enhances all agency-based approaches. If learners cannot control their own learning (Benson, 2011), their development and exertion of agency is limited.

3 Practical Applications

Now that the underlying key pedagogical-methodological principles for an agency-based approach have been established, this section proposes a series of pedagogical actions that can be implemented in the upper-primary English language classroom. As these principles do not always occur separately during the lessons, they have been divided into: *Implementing Teaching-Learning Sequences* and *Creating a Trusting Learning Environment*. The former is mainly based on reflective action-oriented learning (Esteve et al., 2017), whereas the latter is centred on the emotional dimension (Johnson & Golombek, 2016).

Implementing Teaching–Learning Sequences

Teaching–learning sequences consist of a series of concatenated tasks which cognitively and communicatively orient upper-primary learners at their own pace. The aim is to enable them to express themselves in real-life age-relevant situations, such as meeting English language learners of a similar age from another country during an online exchange. When looking for another school to collaborate with, it is recommended to become part of an online community that facilitates the communication. The pedagogical tasks draw on individual and collaborative practices to enhance learners' capacity to confidently communicate through their agency in English. Table 3.1 outlines the eight actions from the teaching–learning sequence.

Table 3.1 Pedagogical actions for teaching–learning sequences

Pedagogical actions for teaching–learning sequences
1. Communicatively orienting learners
2. Personally orienting learners
3. Cognitively orienting learners in English
4. Consciously reflecting on errors
5. Raising awareness on evaluation criteria
6. Practicing via role playing
7. Conducting the communicative task
8. Evaluating with the learners

Adapted from Lagerwaard, 2021, p. 132

Communicatively Orienting Learners

After introducing the main communicative goal and the age-relevant context where the interaction will occur, in this example an online conversation with a learner in another country, the learners need to be communicatively oriented through individual and collaborative reflections. Individually, learners brainstorm in English or their own languages, the most likely steps of this interaction and the rationales for each step. After sharing ideas in groups, the anticipated steps are discussed. The steps are not fixed and instead, act as communicative orientation that learners can flexibly move away from to adequately exert their agency and fall back on during the interaction to keep the dialogue going (Gao, 2010).

Personally Orienting Learners

Before moving on, the children of each class need to exchange their names and interests. This information needs to be shared with the other teacher to form pairs from different schools but, ideally with similar interests. Once the pairs have been allocated, the sequence proceeds by establishing a classroom discussion on possible topics of interest to both classes. Then, learners write what they would like to say for each step of the interaction if it were taking place in their own languages. Therefore, this highlights to the teachers how learners would like to express themselves during the interaction. These creations then form the basis for learners to find their own voice in English within the communicative event.

Cognitively Orienting Learners in English

Once learners have written what they would like to say for each communicative step, they need to collaboratively discover the English equivalents. While challenging, it helps the children's use of English to retain authenticity. For example, instead of opting for the formulaic coursebook greeting, '*How are you?*', learners can co-discover expressions closer to their ages and identities, such as '*What's up?*' or '*How's it going?*'. Rather than providing set answers, groupwork is encouraged so learners can be as creative as possible with their own ideas in English.

Consciously Reflecting on Errors

It is beneficial for learners to reflect on frequently made English language errors which are common to the group, as these samples derive from their own communicative needs. Error correction techniques should be as engaging and non-daunting as possible, for example, anonymised sentences taken from their co-created dialogue drafts printed on large sheets of paper cut to resemble a set of class grass skirts. The learners then collaborate in their teams to take a strand of the skirt (a sentence with an error) and support each other in identifying and correcting the error. The grass skirts can then be reconstructed on the board for plenary checking with the learners supplying the corrections to their classmates. Finally, the learners can use these to upgrade their own dialogue drafts and thereby increase their accuracy during the live oral interaction.

Raising Awareness of Evaluation Criteria

Before progressing to the communicative task itself, the learners' awareness needs to be raised regarding some of the crucial aspects of oral communication. This can be achieved by inviting learners to collaboratively brainstorm a set number of success criteria (Ellis & Ibrahim, 2015) for having an online conversation in English. When each groups' success criteria have been shared, they can then engage in a pyramid discussion to select a final set for the class with input from the teacher on any essential aspects which the children may not have collectively considered.

Practising via Role Playing

Prior to the main event, a similar communicative sphere needs to be created in class where learners can rehearse, drawing fully on their scaffolded preparation. Such role playing using devices where the learners take turns to be themselves and the learner in the partner school class is intended to help learners to flexibly use their dialogue drafts, which should not be seen as scripts, but moreover as orientations from their agency. The classroom thereby becomes a safe environment which encourages learners to improvise. Even learners who tend to follow their preparation as a script when role playing are indirectly encouraged to improvise, as they need to anticipate unexpected questions or remarkable information. This increasingly spontaneous use of English is crucially important for enhancing learners' positive self-esteem, as it helps them be increasingly aware they are actually able to speak in English.

Conducting the Communicative Task

The idea of meeting a child of a similar age from another country for the first time, thinking about what could go wrong, and being afraid of making a negative impression are examples of feelings that can lead to a child being apprehensive about engaging in a real-life interaction. However, these emotionally charged interactions have the potential to positively influence English language learners' self-belief systems, as the children come to realise by interacting that they are capable of maintaining a conversation in English. Noticing this improvement frequently leads to learners feeling more comfortable and secure in interactions during the school year, which is reflected in their increased volitional self-expression from their agency, such as by asking questions out of interest, and anticipating what has been said.

Evaluating with the Learners

Following each interaction, the learners should have opportunities to evaluate the experience in terms of the success criteria which they previously have co-created. The teacher evaluates with the learners as a dialogue in accessible terms focusing on key strengths to build up positive self-beliefs (Read, 2020) and their points to work on to express themselves more effectively next time. A child-friendly, visual example of this could be using three stars and a wish, where the stars represent what went really well and the wish is a key action with a concrete strategy for improvement next time they have an interactive task in English.

Creating a Trusting Learning Environment

Establishing a conducive learning environment built on trust is another determining factor with regard to promoting and developing the upper-primary learners' self-expression. Trust encourages learners to participate during lessons and consequently learn from their efforts without having to worry about being right or wrong, getting a low mark, making a poor impression, or being reprimanded. In addition, trust also promotes the volitional use of the learners' English language through their agency. The positive relations that are experienced when talking to someone else, allows learners to open up and fearlessly explain what is concerning them. The creation of such a trusting environment requires time and care, especially with large classes. Although the use of common procedures to establish trust are encouraged, such as negotiated classroom rules, positive classroom management strategies, establishing rapport, personalization, collaboration, and communicative activities, this chapter explores two novel areas. Whereas the first principle, *Providing Descriptive Feedback*, facilitates the development of the upper-primary learners' agency in English, the second principle, *Anticipating your Negative Emotions as a Teacher*, encourages their volitional self-expression.

Providing Descriptive Feedback

As upper-primary learners are still building their self-image from the significant people around them, their teachers' feedback matters to them. When properly used, feedback can be a powerful tool to establish trusting relationships, increase learners' self-beliefs and self-esteem, and develop growth mind-sets (Dweck, 2006). To attain this, rather than overly providing evaluative feedback, learners need increased descriptive feedback. These specific descriptions enable learners to discover something new about themselves which they can add to their self-knowledge bank (Read, 2020). For instance, when learners after engaging in a communicative activity only receive the teacher's evaluative feedback ('Excellent!', 'Well done!', etc.), it is not clear what from the entire interaction has been acknowledged and does not allow them to discover anything new about themselves. However, if this is combined with descriptive feedback ('I am amazed by how you dared to improvise.', 'It was clever to use gestures when you could not find the word you were looking for.', etc.) and concrete examples, then learners can become aware of their strengths and points to work on when expressing themselves.

This self-awareness generates the development of learners' inner-confidence to fearlessly interact in English and helps them to develop growth mind-sets, as they learn to focus on the process of learning from challenges and mistakes through hard work, which can help them feel empowered to more often speak in the target language through their agency. Simultaneously, these sincere, constructive descriptions, if not overused, transmit teachers care about their learners and their development, which not only encourages learner participation, but also helps to build trusting relationships.

Anticipating Your Negative Emotions as a Teacher

Whereas the impact of upper-primary learners' emotions on their language learning has been frequently discussed in second language acquisition literature, the reverse relationship that language learning may influence emotions is rarely considered. The emotions that learners experience are derived from and constructed in dialogue with the teacher and classmates. For this reason, how teachers express their emotions in class, especially when these have negative connotations, can have a vital impact on the established trusting relationships between learners and teachers. Teachers therefore need to be able to identify the emotions they experience during interaction with their upper-primary learners, and carefully decide how to eventually act upon these.

For example, when upper-primary learners either misbehave in class or do not pay attention, it is likely for teachers to immediately express the negative personal feelings these actions have caused. The teachers' expression of their negative emotions, such as anger, is likely to draw the relationship between them and the learners apart, especially when they decide not even to listen to what their learners have to say. Instead of directly confronting the learners, teachers need to intentionally engage in interactions where the learners' affective reactions are listened to and recognized. These situations of conflict need to be embraced by teachers, but this can only be achieved when they take their time to carefully consider how to act upon their own emotions. Managing conflicts by talking about them with the learners shows the learners they are being listened to, makes teachers understand how and when to intervene, provides an insight on what learners consider meaningful, and creates a sphere where all participants experience trust.

4 Conclusion

This chapter serves as a contribution towards an ongoing exploration about both the nature of agency and how English language use through agency on the part of upper-primary English learners can be promoted and developed. Although a working definition of the concept of agency has been included, it is recommended to pursue further research that makes 'understanding learner agency, its emergence and ongoing development a priority' (Mercer, 2012, p. 58). This also applies to research that aims, in accordance with Stetsenko (2017), the CEFR (2020), and its *Companion Volume* (2018) at working on developing learners' agency as social agents by providing them with access to the tools that afford this. Based on this chapter, Reflective Action-Oriented Learning (Esteve et al., 2017) and The Emotional Dimension (Johnson & Golombek, 2016) form an informed pathway through which learners of ten years and older are likely to develop and volitionally exert their agency in English.

On the one hand, implementing teaching-learning sequences enables upper-primary learners not to limit their self-expression through their agency as a result of the communicative and cognitive orientation (Gao, 2010). It can also make learners aware through improvising and anticipating in English of their improvement and their capability to express themselves. The positive self-belief that is created as a result of the implementation of teaching–learning sequences allows upper-primary learners to confidently express themselves increasingly during the school year (Bown, 2009; Mercer, 2012; Lagerwaard, 2021).

In addition, creating a trusting learning environment (Mercer, 2011, 2012; Lagerwaard, 2021) encourages upper-primary learners to fearlessly participate actively to learn from errors and fosters the volitional use of the learners' English language use through their agency. This trust can be attained by common strategies, such as negotiated classroom rules, positive classroom management strategies, establishing rapport, using personalization, collaborative and communicative activities. However, this chapter also proposes *Providing Descriptive Feedback* to facilitate the development of the upper-primary learners' agency in English, and *Anticipating your own Negative Emotions as a Teacher* to foster learners' volitional self-expression in the classroom.

However, even though the implementation and effects of this approach have been extensively analysed in a doctoral study (Lagerwaard, 2021), the entire informed agency-based communicative pedagogical approach should be seen as a provisional informed blueprint for promoting agency in classroom practice for learners older than ten years, rather than a guarantee of it. Research is encouraged in different sociocultural contexts where the approach is analysed on its implementation and effects.

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4. Creating a Model for Intercultural Competence in Early Years and Primary ELT

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1 Introduction

The development of intercultural competence is an essential goal of language teaching (Byram & Wagner, 2018) and has a crucial role to play in enabling learners to become responsible citizens who can lead positive lives in diverse societies, including their own (Porto, 2019). Language teaching thus not only contributes to the education and development of individuals but also to whole societies (Porto et al., 2017). Given the lowering of the starting age for learning English as a foreign language globally in recent years (Rixon, 2015), it has become imperative to address how intercultural competence may be effectively integrated in early English language programmes in order to develop awareness, understanding, skills and attitudes that are relevant to children's immediate, everyday lives, and lay the foundations for creating responsible, open-minded global citizens in the future.

The aim of this chapter is to propose a pedagogical model which provides a framework for developing intercultural competence with children between the ages of four and twelve. The design of the model addresses key issues related to the feasibility of developing intercultural competence in an early years or primary school context in a fast-changing world. The three-phase model goes beyond a superficial, fact-based approach to teaching culture and is realistic for early years and primary ELT teachers to deliver within current provisions of teacher education. The model is designed to reflect children's cognitive, conceptual, psychological, social and emotional development at different ages. The model builds on the concept of windows and mirrors (Short, 2009; Sims Bishop, 1990) with parallel objectives to open windows on children's awareness and understanding of other cultures and, at the same time, to provide a reflective mirror in which children develop awareness and understanding of their own cultural identities. Through focusing on connections rather than differences between peoples and cultures, the model also draws on the notion of intercultural threads (Driscoll & Holliday, 2019).

2 Current Issues and Research

Intercultural education has been variously described as teaching culture, intercultural understanding, intercultural communicative competence, and intercultural citizenship. These terms reflect different perspectives which need to be considered in a model of developing intercultural competence with children.

Teaching Culture

Culture is widely used as an umbrella term to refer to the common history, social behaviour, attitudes and traditions shared by a group of people (Driscoll et al., 2013). A distinction is sometimes made between culture with a capital 'C' as in art, music and literature, and culture with a lower case 'c' as in habits and behaviour (Driscoll et al., 2013). The metaphor of an iceberg is also used to characterize the concept of culture, with social behaviour and cultural information as the visible part of the iceberg and less tangible aspects, such as values, attitudes and beliefs lying below the surface (Dolan, 2014; Woodgate-Jones & Grenfell, 2012). While culture is one element that contributes to an individual's sense of identity, it is recognised that this is defined by a complex blend of other influences as well. Culture is a shifting, dynamic concept which is reflected in a multitude of ways in different individuals in any society (Byram, 2020b; Hoff, 2020; Holliday, 2011). The traditional concept of homogeneous national cultures gives a static and outdated representation of culture (Holliday, 2011). A focus on ‘teaching culture’ also tends to lead to an emphasis on what is ‘foreign’ and a simplistic ‘us’ and ‘them’ approach based on national borders (Byram & Wagner, 2018; Dervin, 2010; Driscoll & Holliday, 2019; Woodgate-Jones & Grenfell, 2012).

Intercultural Understanding

Intercultural understanding is the term used for children to learn about other cultures and better understand their own. Intercultural understanding is seen as a vehicle to combat prejudice and stereotyping and to promote tolerance and diversity. It also involves being open to different ways of doing things as well as being willing to suspend judgement and understand the world from different perspectives (Driscoll, 2017). Although primary children may be exposed to other cultures and languages through children’s literature (Dolan, 2014; Ibrahim, 2020; Leland et al., 2018) and technology (Driscoll & Holliday, 2019), the use of the term intercultural understanding recognises that primary children are likely to have less direct contact than older learners with people of other cultures outside the classroom. In this way, intercultural understanding can be seen as the precursor or foundation for developing intercultural competence.

Intercultural Communicative Competence

The concept of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997, 2020b) has to date been the most widely used theoretical framework in foreign language programmes. Following Byram (1997, 2020b), this builds on communicative competence and is based on five ‘*savoirs*’ which comprise knowledge, skills, behaviours, attitudes and awareness:

- *Savoir*—this refers to knowledge of self and other social groups and their cultures.
- *Savoir comprendre*—this refers to interpreting and understanding cultural meanings.
- *Savoir apprendre/faire*—this refers to skills of discovery and interaction, and includes the ability to decentre and empathise.

- *Savoir être*—this refers to attitudes of curiosity and openness, including how to relativise one’s own cultural values and see things from other viewpoints.
- *Savoir s’engager*—this includes political education and the development of critical cultural awareness.

Byram’s (1997, 2020b) model assumes the mature cognition and access to real-life contexts of an adult. However, Byram and Doyé (1999), Doyé (1999) and Kirsch (2008) have also claimed that some aspects of the model could be appropriate for children at primary school, such as the development of comparative knowledge, attitudes of openness, curiosity and tolerance, and skills of interaction and discovery. In addition, it is arguable that in upper primary, with appropriate support, it is possible to develop the ability to interact in an intercultural context and to foster critical cultural awareness as well.

While Byram’s (1997) model has the benefit of being concrete and coherent (Hoff, 2020) and feasible to implement by classroom practitioners, it has also been criticised for its limitations as a guide for intercultural teaching and learning in the twenty-first century (Hoff, 2020; Holliday, 2011). One reason for this is due to the complex, dynamic cultural changes taking place in a fast-moving global world and the need to account for ambiguities, tensions and contradictions in more varied intercultural communicative contexts, such as encounters between multicultural, multilingual members of society and digital communication (Hoff, 2020). Byram (2020b) acknowledges this in reflections on the rapid increase of ‘sojourners’, more frequently referred to as ‘migrants’ or ‘immigrants’, in the global context of the twenty-first century and their multiple modes of experiencing, comparing, analysing, critiquing, accommodating and adapting to other ways of life which he would ideally like all language learners to be able to achieve.

Intercultural Citizenship

Intercultural citizenship builds on the concept of intercultural competence by extending this to involvement and action in the local community, or wider, global community, outside of home or school (Byram 2020b; Porto, 2019). Intercultural citizenship is based on a view of language that takes into account multilingual identities and translanguaging, as for example in the use of bilingual and multilingual children’s literature (Ibrahim, 2020), and builds on the affordances of globalisation and technology to allow intercultural communication and coordinated social action to take place (Byram, 2020b; Byram et al., 2016; Porto, 2019). Topics with a high social relevance which are directly related to citizenship and global concerns form the content of lessons. These may include issues such as poverty, hunger, education, gender equality and climate change based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Read, 2017) and develop a wide range of analytical and critical thinking skills potentially leading to direct action or service to the local or wider, global community (Byram, 2020b; Porto et al., 2017). Although children in upper primary develop initial analytical, critical thinking and organisational skills associated with intercultural citizenship, there are obvious ethical, permission and safety issues related to promoting certain kinds of activism outside their school and home.

Issues in Developing Intercultural Competence with Children

Research and discussion of approaches to intercultural learning have largely focused on older learners. However, some attention has also been given to current practice and what it might be possible to achieve with children at primary school (Driscoll et al., 2013; Driscoll & Holliday, 2019; Driscoll & Simpson, 2015) and arguably in the early years as well. Based on this, it is suggested that there are six key issues which any proposed model for teaching intercultural competence to children needs to take into account. These are briefly examined in turn, including implications for the model for developing intercultural competence proposed.

Gap Between Theory and Practice

The intercultural dimension of learning a foreign language is widely seen as desirable by policy makers, school administrators and teachers (Driscoll, 2017; Driscoll et al., 2013; Driscoll & Simpson, 2015; Woodgate-Jones, 2009). In addition to providing opportunities for children to explore and reflect on the lives of others as well as their own, intercultural learning is seen to play a significant social role in the prevention of negative stereotypes, prejudice and racism (Driscoll et al., 2013). However, at the same time, research has shown that there is a gap between the ascribed value given to intercultural learning and what actually happens in practice which is neither strategically planned nor systematically implemented (Driscoll et al., 2013; Woodgate-Jones, 2009).

This gap between views about the desirability of integrating an intercultural dimension into English language classrooms and actual practice may be due to a lack of confidence and skills in teaching intercultural competence in age-appropriate ways. It may also be due to a limited focus on culture in most English language syllabuses and the lack of time given to English language learning in the curriculum. A model for developing intercultural competence with children needs to close this gap by providing a pedagogical framework for a holistic approach to the development of intercultural knowledge, skills, awareness and attitudes that is in sync with children’s ages and stages of development, as well as their English language proficiency levels, and can be implemented by practitioners who are not specifically trained or skilled in intercultural education.

Focus and Design of Early Years and PELT Syllabuses

In most preschool and primary ELT coursebook syllabuses, there is a clear emphasis on the development of linguistic competence and skills. This is historically the result of the influence of adult syllabuses and the CEFR, as well as a response to the requirements of external YLE exams (Parker & Valente, 2019). Although intercultural learning is an integral part of the process of learning a language (Driscoll & Simpson, 2015), the knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness needed are not specified in as much detail as language, if they are included at all. This may be due to an implicit assumption, or widely held misconception that if you teach the language, you also automatically teach the culture (Byram & Wagner, 2018). It may also be due to the priority given to language learning in the limited time available for foreign language teaching in the school curriculum, as well as the difficulties of assessing intercultural learning (Byram, 2020a; Perry & Southwell, 2011).

When intercultural learning is specified in early years and primary ELT syllabuses, this is likely to be either with reference to traditional songs, stories, rhymes or games from the so-called English-speaking world or to cultural facts and social behaviours that children are invited to compare with their own. However, it is important to recognise that many modern, preschool and primary ELT coursebooks specify other syllabus strands that also contribute to aspects of intercultural learning (e.g., Read, 2019a, b, c; Read & Ormerod, 2015). These include values education and attitudes, such as openness, tolerance and respect for diversity, and content-based learning or CLIL, with a focus on global issues that affect and connect people everywhere, such as climate change. They also incorporate learning strategies and thinking skills, such as using prior knowledge, creative and critical thinking, social and emotional learning, such as developing empathy and kindness, and critical literacy, such as understanding the intended purpose of a text. A model for developing intercultural competence with children needs to ensure that syllabus strands and outcomes that contribute to the development of intercultural competence cover a balanced range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness. These should be fully integrated and specified in a similar level of detail to the linguistic strand.

Representation of Culture

The way that culture is frequently represented in foreign language classrooms and learning materials has been the subject of criticism (Driscoll & Holliday, 2019; Driscoll & Simpson, 2015). The notion of a homogeneous target culture which corresponds to the target language being taught is fallacious and misleading in the sense that any language encompasses and reflects multiple cultural realities (Driscoll & Holliday, 2019). The construct of a monolithic, national culture also gives rise to a teaching approach which principally focuses on the knowledge of superficial facts, such as those based on the 'F' topics—food, folklore, fashion, facts, festivals, famous people (e.g., Short, 2009; Woodgate-Jones & Grenfell, 2012). This reflects an 'iceberg' interpretation of culture with a focus on the visible, superficial aspects of culture (Woodgate-Jones & Grenfell, 2012). It also encourages a binary view which is just as likely to reinforce stereotypes and prejudices as it is to promote understanding, tolerance and respect (Driscoll, 2017; Driscoll & Holliday, 2019).

At the same time, however, as Byram and Wagner (2018) have highlighted, although it is misguided and misleading to represent culture in terms of information about a country, the concept of culture as referring to a national group is part of many foreign language educators' understanding of what culture is. As Byram and Wagner (2018) further maintain, this concept of culture also arguably has pedagogic usefulness in making accessible to learners aspects of culture that are complex in the same way that teachers simplify the understanding and learning of grammar.

Related to this, it is also important to consider the developmental ages and stages of children. For young children, initial learning input and activities need to be concrete, rather than abstract, and based on the ‘here and now’. The issue seems to lie not so much in teaching child-friendly cultural facts but in the way these are presented, which emphasises polarisation and differences between two idealised and homogenised cultural groups (Driscoll, 2017; Driscoll & Holliday, 2019). This may be exacerbated by a lack of appropriate scaffolding and mediation to enable children to develop an awareness of multiple cultural realities, reflect on similarities and differences and make connections with their own experiences and lives, and those of their peers who may share diverse cultural backgrounds too. A model for developing intercultural competence with children needs to ensure that culture is represented in a way that is concrete, accessible and appealing, yet without being simplistic. It also needs to provide the tools to gradually develop children’s deeper awareness and understanding of complex cultural realities and ambiguities over time.

How Intercultural Competence Is Taught

Culture is rarely given much importance in primary language lessons (Driscoll, 2017). When it is taught, this is likely to be either through exposing children to traditional songs, stories and playground games (Driscoll et al., 2013) or through familiarising them with superficial knowledge and facts which underscore differences between cultures and may reinforce stereotypes (Short, 2009; Woodgate-Jones & Grenfell, 2012). In such approaches, the main emphasis is on knowledge and awareness about what is ‘foreign’ and different rather than developing children’s skills and understanding of their own cultures and identities (Driscoll, 2017) and the connections they have with others.

The development of intercultural competence needs to move beyond a binary approach based on monolithic notions of culture and start with children themselves in the immediate, non-threatening environment of their classrooms (Driscoll et al., 2013; Driscoll & Simpson, 2015). Through exploring diversity and multilingualism in their everyday world, children can develop awareness, skills and attitudes that encourage them to be open, reflective and willing to see the world from other perspectives (Driscoll, 2017). This may be achieved, for example, through the use of picturebooks (Dolan, 2014; Leland et al., 2018) on issues such as exclusion or family differences, or through topic-based work on global issues, such as climate change or gender equality (Dolan, 2014; Leland et al., 2018; Short, 2009). Such an approach involves identifying intercultural threads, which encourage children to see similarities and connections between peoples, and developing skills such as discovery, inquiry, decentring, as well as attitudes, such as empathy, tolerance and respect (Holliday, 2018). A model for developing intercultural competence with children needs to ensure that the starting point for learning is the child and that scaffolding and mediation by the teacher identifies relevant intercultural threads and develops knowledge, skills, awareness and attitudes based on children's current, real life experiences. It also needs to avoid simplistic comparisons and contrasts between cultures misleadingly represented as homogeneous national groups.

Teachers' Skills and Capabilities

Primary English language teachers may lack confidence in their ability to teach intercultural competence due to their limited experience of diverse cultural identities and little guidance during their training. Textbook syllabuses may offer little support (Porto, 2019) and cultural content may be presented in a way which focuses on superficial generalisations and differences (Driscoll & Simpson, 2015). Teachers themselves may have a narrow conception of culture as corresponding to homogeneous national groups. They may also perceive their identity predominantly as a language teacher responsible for the linguistic competence of their learners, rather than as an educator with a role to develop children's intercultural competence as well (Porto et al., 2017). Teachers may also feel under pressure to deliver the language syllabus (Porto, 2019) due to limited time and the demands of tests and, as intercultural competence does not usually form part of assessment (Porto, 2019), it is often only included as an extra.

Driscoll and Holliday (2019) refer to primary language teachers' limited intercultural expertise and Porto (2019) refers to the difficulty in educating teachers both to become interculturally competent themselves and to teach intercultural competence. In the case of PELT teachers, however, this negative assessment of teachers' skills and capabilities needs to be counterbalanced by looking at significant areas which have been identified for developing intercultural competence and in which PELT teachers do have real or potential expertise. One example is working with inclusion and diversity in a school setting. As Driscoll (2017) has suggested, the best place to start intercultural learning with children is learning about ‘otherness’ at school and preschool and primary teachers are frequently experts in creating a warm and caring classroom community based on holistic learning and values such as tolerance, openness and respect. A second example is using multimedia and technology which, as Driscoll and Holliday (2019) have said, offers a way to bring real cultural experiences into the classroom and is an area in which many PELT teachers are becoming increasingly proficient. A third example is CLIL, or content-based teaching, which is also often part of even generalist primary language teachers’ core skills. Both Driscoll and Simpson (2015) and Byram and Wagner (2018) stress the importance of cross-curricular content as a way of engaging children in significant issues. Examples are topics, such as climate change, based on the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, which add a global dimension to intercultural learning. Last but not least, a fourth example is the way that PELT teachers can draw on their training and skills in using communicative language teaching (CLT) methodology to integrate intercultural learning through experiential learning, communication and reflection (Byram & Wagner, 2018). Rather than seeing teachers’ skills and capabilities as a deficit, a model for developing intercultural competence needs to build positively on the skills and competencies that primary English language teachers already have.

Children’s Development

As soon as children start school, intercultural learning is a daily reality. This encompasses all aspects of their lives as they adapt to a new context, with different rules and codes of behaviour from ones they are familiar with at home, and learn to work and play with peers who may be more or less culturally similar or different to themselves. Even very young children are capable of understanding concepts such as fairness, equality and the values of tolerance and mutual respect when they are presented in age-appropriate ways (Walton et al., 2013). By integrating the development of intercultural skills and attitudes during English language lessons from the outset in a way that relates directly to their everyday lives, children develop a strong sense of their own emerging cultural identities as well as a sense of curiosity and acceptance of cultural diversity in others. In this way, as Driscoll and Simpson (2015) have highlighted, developing intercultural competence in early foreign language learning contributes to broad educational goals that are immediately relevant as well as preparing children for the future.

The traditional Jesuit adage ‘give me a child until they are seven’ points to the flexibility of young minds and the fact that values and attitudes acquired in early childhood are likely to be long-lasting. These can also be a springboard for more mature intercultural understanding, skills and awareness in line with children’s social, cognitive, psychological and emotional development as they become older. By about the age of six, children have already developed a simple concept of their dominant cultural identity or identities, often associated with a country, nationality and flag (Barrett, 2005). However, rather than focusing the intercultural strand of English language learning on knowledge about ‘national cultures’, which may be misleading, divisive and reinforce prejudices and stereotypes, it would be more effective to adopt an approach which simultaneously fosters individual children’s multilingual and multicultural identities (Ibrahim, 2020), and develops intercultural skills and attitudes that relate to their everyday lives (Byram & Wagner, 2018). A prerequisite for achieving this is the creation of a trusting, supportive learning environment. The role of discussion and the provision of appropriate language support in order for children to be able to express their ideas and feelings, exchange personal views, and engage in imaginative and critical thinking is also crucial. A model for developing intercultural competence with children needs to be designed to reflect children’s ages and stages of development and to provide input with a real-world focus and suitable language support.

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3 Practical Applications

Model for Developing Intercultural Competence with Children

The proposed model (Fig. 4.1) is designed to provide a practical pedagogical framework for developing intercultural competence with children approximately four to twelve years of age.

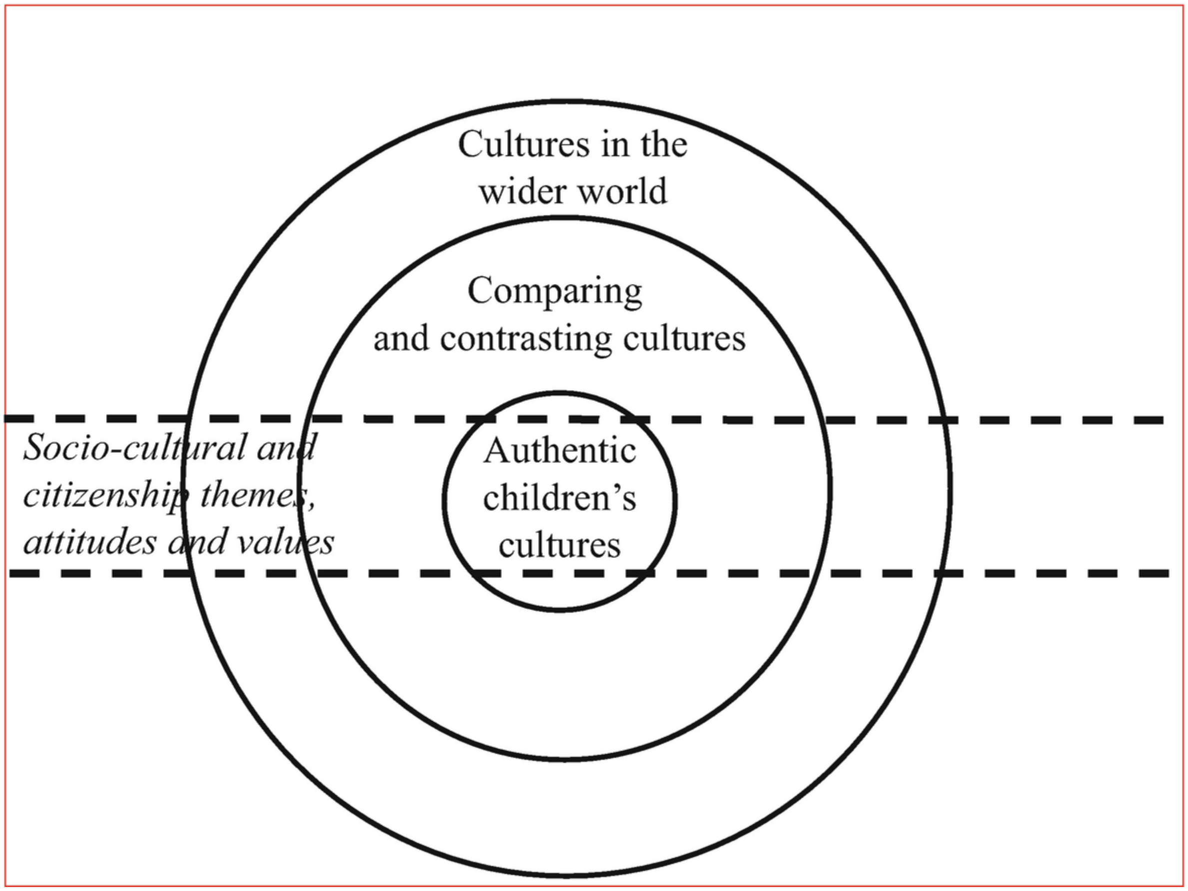
Cultures in the wider world
Comparing and contrasting cultures
Authentic children's cultures
Socio-cultural and citizenship themes, attitudes and values

Fig. 4.1 Model for developing intercultural competence with children

The three phases of the model reflect different approximate ages and stages of children's development. The model takes the child's experience and capabilities as its starting point and moves outwards from the 'here and now' play orientation of the initial phase to building on children's capacity for extending their knowledge and skills and for more formal, abstract thinking in upper primary. However, the phases are not discrete and are intended to be built on and extended cumulatively as children develop and mature (Fig. 4.2). Transversal sociocultural themes, attitudes and values, such as autonomy, cooperation and respect for the environment are recycled and developed in ways that are appropriate to each phase. Each phase opens new windows onto children's intercultural awareness and understanding, mirrors reflect the development of their own cultural identities and intercultural threads ensure that topics and themes are continually linked to children's personal experience of language and culture and the real-world context of their lives.

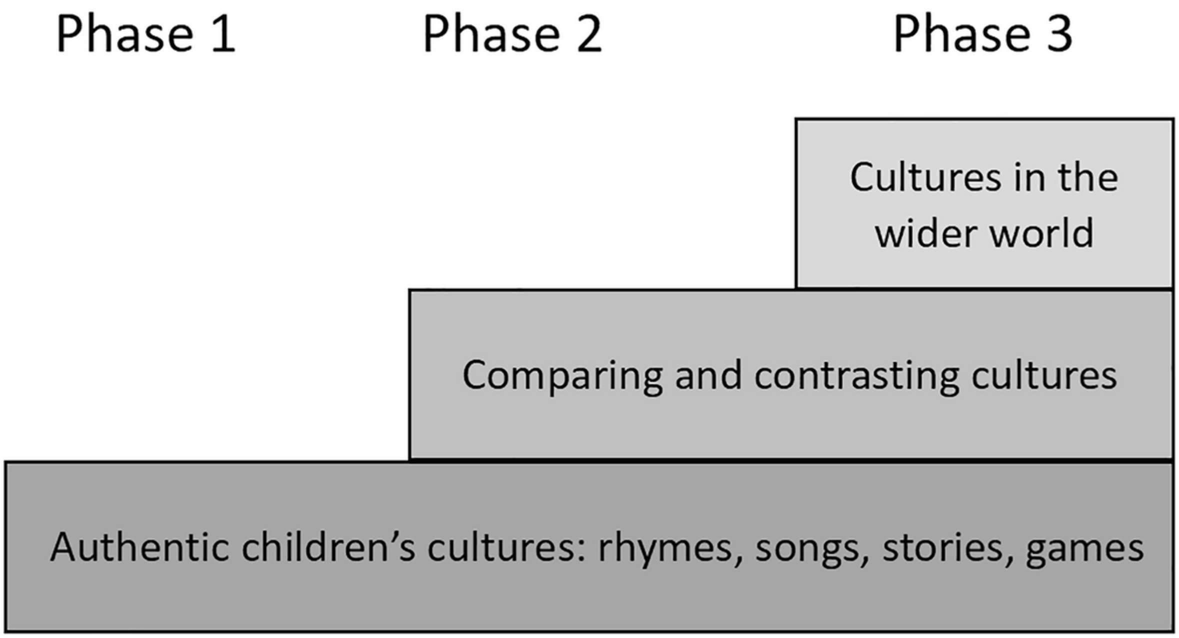
Phase 1
Phase 2
Phase 3
Cultures in the wider world
Comparing and contrasting cultures
Authentic children's cultures: rhymes, songs, stories, games

Fig. 4.2 Cumulative introduction of phases of the model

Phase 1: Authentic Children's Cultures

This phase uses the rich resources of authentic children's cultures, such as nursery rhymes, songs, picturebooks, stories and playground games to engage children in pleasurable activities that are likely to be similar to ones they know in their other language(s). These may also include songs from international contexts (Shin, 2017) and dual-language or multilingual picturebooks (Ibrahim, 2020) which reinforce and affirm children's diverse identities. The use of materials from authentic children's cultures fosters a positive home-school link and promotes children's willingness to participate. As Cook (2000) has speculated, the powerful 4/4 rhythm of nursery rhymes in English and other world languages may play a role in drawing children irresistibly into using language, and thereby also participating in its culture, and the repetitive refrains of well-known, traditional stories have a similar effect.

Through engaging with authentic children's cultures from the English-speaking world and other global contexts, a window is opened onto the fact that children from diverse cultures enjoy similar activities to themselves, such as saying and acting out a counting rhyme, in other languages; a mirror reflects children's developing competence and positive self-esteem in participating in such activities; and an intercultural thread may include discovering traditional games classmates play, or songs they sing, with who, and in what languages in their cultural contexts at home.

Phase 2: Comparing and Contrasting Cultures

This phase reflects children's developing understanding of the concept of other nationalities, countries and cultures. Children begin to be able to relativise their own diverse cultural identities in relation to their peers and to make comparisons and contrasts. Children develop the ability to decentre and the emotional and psychological maturity to increase their capacity for empathy, as well as their conscious awareness of the role it has in building positive connections and relationships. They also begin to consciously value their own personal language and cultural backgrounds and are willing to accept or embrace the 'diverse diversities' (Dervin, 2010) of their peers. The use of picturebooks which focus on significant sociocultural themes such as exclusion, friendship, self-esteem, war, refugees, loneliness, family differences and gender issues, provide children with opportunities to deepen their intercultural understanding, develop critical and creative thinking, and learn more about the cultural identity of others and themselves through the non-threatening lens of fiction (Dolan, 2014; Leland et al., 2018; Read, 2008). Other multimodal texts, including video, can be used to engage interest in discovering the lives of other children and topic and project work provide opportunities for children to compare and contrast aspects of this, such as daily routines, free time activities, sport and food, with their own. Although children of this age frequently enjoy learning unusual, amusing or exotic facts about a 'foreign' culture, it is important to mediate these in a way that teaches children to critically question superficial generalisations and stereotypes. One effective way to do this is to make a superficial generalisation about the children's own country or culture which they will immediately recognise and reject as untrue. During this phase, a window is opened onto children's understanding of another culture and how it relates to their own. Through making direct comparisons and contrasts with their own lives, a mirror reflects and reinforces children's developing sense of their own cultural identities. Intercultural threads, mediated by effective questioning techniques, involve reflection on similarities and differences with peers leading to developing children's awareness that multiple cultural realities exist even within their own classroom spaces.

Phase 3: Cultures in the Wider World

This phase corresponds to upper primary when children have developed greater analytical and evaluative skills and begin to have a more questioning, critical attitude towards aspects of their own cultures. This phase is characterised by increased communicative language skills which, with appropriate scaffolding and support, enable children to exchange and discuss ideas, pose relevant questions, and interact in an intercultural context. It also reflects children's broadening interests and curiosity in the wider world as well as, in many contexts, their proficiency in using multimedia and digital technology, such as via child-safe search engines, to discover intercultural information for themselves. Intercultural learning input may include traditional stories, myths and legends from global cultures that develop children's understanding of different values and beliefs that can be compared with their own. It may also include a focus on social justice issues, which affect and connect everyone globally, for example, through topic or project-based work related to one or more of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and leading to an intercultural citizenship outcome such as organising a school-based campaign (Read, 2017). Alternatively, projects may include using technology, such as online collaborative exchanges, to establish regular, experiential, interactive encounters with children at school in other countries, thus providing opportunities to compare and contrast aspects of their lives with others across borders and interact in an authentic intercultural context. During this phase, a window is opened onto discovering global cultures and their different values through investigative inquiry; a mirror reflects children's developing self-awareness of themselves as citizens in a global context, their increasing competence and confidence in being able to acquire understanding about different cultures and their ability to interact in an intercultural context. Intercultural threads, mediated by a combination of encouragement, gently probing questions and child-friendly reflection activities, lead children to draw on their own knowledge and skills to understand other cultures and to use analytical and critical thinking skills to relativise and compare them to their own.

As outlined above and as Table 4.1 shows, the model provides a flexible template for developing intercultural knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness in a systematically progressive way that corresponds to children's ages and stages of development. Through maintaining a balance between windows, mirrors (Short, 2009) and intercultural threads (Driscoll & Holliday, 2019), there is recognition that intercultural learning is a complex, dynamic process and that learning outcomes are likely to be different for every class and every child. For teachers, the principle of extending language activities whenever relevant to build on children's intercultural knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness is a way of ensuring that developing intercultural competence is a truly integrated part of children's language learning rather than an add-on with no logical coherence or structure.

Table 4.1 Sample intercultural competence syllabus objectives

	Phase 1	**Phase 2**	**Phase 3**
Knowledge	Songs, rhymes, stories and games	Comparative information about other cultures	World cultures and global issues in context
Skills	Ability to participate & interact in cultural activities verbally and non-verbally.	Ability to relativise and see own culture and behaviours in relation to others; Ability to compare and contrast own and other culture(s) Ability to 'decentre'; Ability to empathise.	Ability to discover and acquire new knowledge about cultures and cultural practices; Ability to interpret and understand simple cultural 'documents'; Ability to interact with a sympathetic interlocutor in an intercultural context.
Attitudes	Willingness to participate; Readiness to engage with cultural conventions embedded in cultural activities; Interest and pleasure in cultural activities.	Openness and curiosity towards similarities and differences; Respect and tolerance of others.	Interest in discovering other perspectives and cultures; Willingness to question assumptions in your own culture; Readiness to engage in verbal and non-verbal interaction in an intercultural context.
Awareness	Awareness of one or more languages different to your own; Awareness that similar kinds of songs, stories, etc. exist in other languages.	Awareness of a relational perspective; Awareness of own cultural identity and that of others.	Awareness of differing cultural assumptions and values; Awareness of being able to draw on your own knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to understand other cultures.

Benefits of the Proposed Model

The proposed model shares an advantage of Byram's (1997, 2020b) model in that it is concrete (Hoff, 2020) and feasible for practitioners to implement. It also builds on categories of knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness based on Byram's five *'savoirs'* to define syllabus objectives. However, the proposed model goes beyond Byram's (1997, 2020b) model in that it provides a specifically age-appropriate guide for developing intercultural competence with early years and primary children and is designed for use in the global context of the twenty-first century where multilingualism and complex, shifting cultural identities are increasingly the norm (Hoff, 2020; Holliday, 2011; Ibrahim, 2020). The model also addresses the six issues previously identified as problematic in developing intercultural competence with children effectively in the following way:

1. It offers a pathway for implementing policy guidelines and positive institutional and teacher beliefs about the value of teaching intercultural competence, thereby closing the gap identified by Woodgate-Jones (2009) and Driscoll et al. (2013).

2. It provides a framework for syllabus design that allows for the planned progression of intercultural knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness in early language learning that is complementary to, and functions in tandem with, the development of language competence, rather than being dominated by it (Parker & Valente, 2019).

3. Culture is represented in a way which directly links learning about different cultures to children's personal experience of language and culture with their families at home and peers at school (Driscoll, 2017; Driscoll & Holliday, 2019).

4. Intercultural competence is developed with a balanced focus on knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness appropriate to each phase of the model. The metaphors of windows, mirrors (Short 2009; Sims Bishop, 1990) and threads (Driscoll & Holliday, 2019) underline the importance of children gaining new intercultural understanding, becoming increasingly self-aware of their own cultural identities, and establishing personal links with their home and school environments. This gives immediate relevance to intercultural learning and promotes values and attitudes, such as openness, cooperation and tolerance. The

use of picturebooks and topics on global issues, such as climate change, also promote critical thinking and global intercultural awareness (Dolan, 2014; Leland et al., 2018).

5. The model takes as its starting point the needs, experience and realities of children (Driscoll et al., 2013; Driscoll & Simpson, 2015) and does not require deep knowledge and experience of diverse cultures. In this way, it builds on professional skills and competencies that primary English language teachers already have (Byram & Wagner, 2018). Together with the pedagogical support of planning lessons to meet clearly specified learning objectives, this gives teachers confidence in their ability to deliver the intercultural competence strand of their syllabus effectively.

6. The model is designed to reflect children's stages of social, emotional, cognitive, conceptual and psychological development and lead them to systematically build up intercultural competence knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness in age-appropriate ways (e.g., Barrett, 2005; Walton et al., 2013). As well as meeting primary education goals (Driscoll & Simpson, 2015), such as inclusion and belonging, it also lays the foundations for children to become responsible global citizens in the future.

4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the value of integrating intercultural education in preschool and primary English language programmes. It has also considered varied perspectives focusing on teaching culture, intercultural understanding, intercultural communicative competence and intercultural citizenship in order to identify six key issues that an effective model for developing intercultural competence with children needs to address. The model proposed aims to provide an innovative pedagogical framework to enable policy makers, school directors and teachers to feel confident in planning and delivering age-appropriate intercultural learning as an integral part of English language programmes in preschool and primary school. The model is flexible and can be adapted to suit different educational and cultural contexts. It is hoped that it will be a useful tool which will support the teaching and learning of intercultural competence in early English language learning in a fast-changing, global world that arguably needs it more than ever.

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5. Enriching Early Years English Language Education with Translanguaging

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1 Introduction

Learning English as another language is a tool for achieving economic development through increased global engagement (Barahona, 2020). The growing demand for using English also opens doors for those who wish to teach the language worldwide (Otwinowska, 2017). However, this growing demand has not been matched by a growing understanding of multilingual pedagogies. Instead of acknowledging and including the linguistic resources bi/multilingual children bring to their English language learning, the policies, curricula and pedagogies of various educational institutions still operate under the influence of monolingual ideologies (Otwinowska, 2017).

Monolingual ideologies assume that bi/multilinguals have separate and isolated language systems and competencies (Cook, 2001). In English language teaching (ELT) classrooms, monolingual ideologies result in teaching aims designed to help English language learners (ELLs) to achieve high levels of proficiency as monolingual English speakers (Barahona, 2020). In response to limited English exposure out of the classroom, English teachers have had the tendency to work toward an English-only pedagogy to maximise ELLs' exposure to English (Pladevall-Ballester & Vraciu, 2017). Children's multilingual practices, such as using their home language(s) in the classroom, have frequently been viewed as having a negative impact on learning English (Alisaari et al., 2019). Teachers who apply English-only pedagogies regard children simply as English learners and fail to see them as emergent bilinguals with complex linguistic repertoires (Turnbull, 2018). In other words, an English-only pedagogy only focuses on what ELLs need to learn and fails to see the value of the language resources ELLs already possess which comprises their multilingual competence.

In recent years, the English-only approach has been criticised by scholars. In ELT academic literature, empirical evidence has shown that the use of learners' first language (L1) can be beneficial in circumstances such as learning abstract and complicated vocabulary and accomplishing narrative tasks (Pladevall-Ballester & Vraciu, 2017). In addition, using learners' L1(s) can establish a rapport between teachers and learners, creating a supportive and enjoyable environment for learning (Bustos-Moraga, 2018).

Even though English teachers may recognise that including children's own languages when teaching English is an important and beneficial pedagogical practice, they may still be employing this practice within a monolingual framework if children are expected to achieve English competence and are assessed as monolingual English speakers. In this sense, English teachers view multilingualism only through the lens of additive bilingualism and insist on pure languages without consideration of language learners' dynamic and complex bi/multilingual reality (García & Otheguy, 2020).

Against this backdrop, this chapter will discuss translanguaging as an alternative to language pedagogies that are based on monolingual ideologies and offer examples to showcase how translanguaging pedagogy can be used in English language education from a holistic, bi/multilingual perspective. The chapter is underpinned by what Conteh and Meier (2014) have called *the multilingual turn*, which conceptualises language teaching on a continuum of 'becoming multilingual' and 'being multilingual'.

2 Issues and Research

According to Conteh and Meier (2014), the multilingual turn can guide research in two directions. Research on emergent multilingualism focuses on scaffolding to learn a target language and the use of elements from the L1, codeswitching, or translation as a resource. Research that emphasizes being multilingual focuses on developing multilingualism, multilingual identities and natural multilingual communication inside and outside of the classroom. Cenoz (2017) postulates that the inclusion of translanguaging practices exists at the centre of the multilingual turn.

Defined as ‘the deployment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire without regard to watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages’ (Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 281), translanguaging helps learners not only in becoming multilinguals (learning the target language), but also in being multilinguals (using and developing their full linguistic repertoires). Translanguaging theory suggests that bilingual children have a unique linguistic repertoire which is used strategically and dynamically to communicate in diverse multilingual settings (García, 2009). Translanguaging pedagogy, therefore, allows and encourages learners to alternate between languages for the purposes of receptive or productive use and aims.

Translanguaging has advanced the field of language education towards a multilingual approach, especially English language education in early years settings (Al-Ahdal, 2020). However, many studies focusing on translanguaging pedagogy demonstrate only a weak version of translanguaging (García & Lin, 2016). According to García and Lin (2016), a weak version of translanguaging is one ‘that supports national and state language boundaries and yet calls for softening these boundaries’. A weak version of translanguaging uses a child’s L1, but only as a temporary scaffold for acquiring the target language, such as English (García & Lin, 2016). In other words, the weak version of translanguaging views English competence as an independent feature from children’s bi/multilingual competence.

Very few studies have focused on a strong version of translanguaging, which is underpinned by the theory that bilingual people do not speak languages, but rather, they use different linguistic features from their unitary linguistic repertoire selectively to communicate (García & Otheguy, 2020). The strong version of translanguaging, therefore, aims to leverage and extend bi/multilingual children's pre-existing linguistic repertoires through interactions with others and with texts that use multiple language features. In other words, in an English language learning setting, the strong version of translanguaging focuses on the bi/multilingual children's languaging, whereas the weak version of translanguaging concerns the mastery of English with assistance of children's L1(s).

In early years English language classrooms, it would appear most sensible to combine the strong and weak versions of translanguaging. García and Lin (2016) suggest that although language education should respond to the socio-political constructed notion of language and help bilingual children to develop their ability to use a target language to succeed academically and socially, language education must also focus on bi/multilingual children and provide them with opportunities to develop their entire language repertoires—the central goal of the strong version of translanguaging. Thus, in early years ELT settings, teachers should go beyond the common practice of allowing the occasional use of children's L1(s) to facilitate English teaching. It is important to systematically convert an English classroom into a translanguaging classroom. In a translanguaging classroom, translanguaging is not only a tool for learning English, learning English is also a tool for expanding bilingual's holistic linguistic repertoires (Turner & Lin, 2020).

Translanguaging pedagogy is particularly congruent with the ways young children learn a new language (Sanders-Smith & Dávila, 2019). This is because young children who have been exposed to two or more languages develop their bi/multilingual and bi/multiliterate competencies without deliberate attention and effort to the dynamic languaging process. However, even though translanguaging is a natural occurrence among bi/multilingual children, it takes a firm translanguaging stance and careful design for English teachers to implement translanguaging pedagogy effectively (Mard-Miettinen et al., 2018). Teachers should use evidence-based translanguaging strategically in order to promote inclusion, engagement, and dynamic bilingualism (Latisha & Young, 2017). Therefore, a translanguaging English classroom requires that a translanguaging design be integrated into every aspect of teaching practice.

Informed by previous studies of translanguaging pedagogy, this chapter highlights several innovative strategies English teachers can employ to construct a translanguaging ELT classroom in early years settings. To successfully combine the aforementioned weak and strong versions of translanguaging in the classroom, teachers can use these strategies to construct three translanguaging components: (1) translanguaging rings; (2) translanguaging assessments; (3) translanguaging spaces. Although Sánchez et al. (2018) originally advocated for the three components as a guide for dual language education programmes, they stated that these components are also applicable in English language learning settings because they help English teachers create opportunities for translanguaging practices and empower all children to 'meaningfully participate in classroom instruction' (p. 42).

Translanguaging rings are a way of temporarily scaffolding instruction for emergent bilingual children using their L1(s) until they achieve an expected level of the target language, such as English (Sánchez et al., 2018). The word 'ring' refers to ongoing and circular scaffolding, meaning teachers provide or take away translanguaging for specific tasks depending on their assessment of children's language-learning needs, performance, and level of engagement in the task. The purpose of constructing translanguaging rings is to use children's own language(s) to facilitate English teaching. The rationale underlying translanguaging rings is based on an understanding that bilingual children are never linguistically balanced because their proficiency in English is different from their proficiency in their L1. Therefore, it is important for teachers to consider every individual's current English level and provide them with scaffolding by using their L1(s).

Translanguaging assessments are ways to gauge bi/multilingual children's English performance holistically by using their entire language repertoire to evaluate and validate bi/multilingual children's dynamic ways of languaging. Otheguy et al. (2015) highlight that when bi/multilingual children's language proficiency level is assessed in each respective language, the result is very different from when they are assessed by translanguaging assessment. This is because translanguaging assessments connect all the various data points for bi/multilingual children's communicative and academic language-use: what they know and what they can express using only English versus using their entire repertoire (Sánchez et al., 2018).

Translanguaging spaces are planned time or activities for teachers and children to bring together English and the learners L1(s). In a translanguaging space, children can demonstrate and expand their bi/multilingual skills, content knowledge, and life experiences without being self-conscious of which language they are using. Translanguaging spaces also help teachers to challenge linguistic hierarchies that position English, for instance, as a superior language to other languages. Furthermore, translanguaging spaces enable children to construct their linguistic identities by using the linguistic features at their disposal (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017).

Since translanguaging rings are temporary or are perhaps a detour that children take in their progress towards learning English, this represents the weak version of translanguaging. Translanguaging assessments can be used to construct the weak and the strong versions of translanguaging depending on how the teacher leads children to navigate between English and their L1(s). In translanguaging spaces, teachers are not concerned about learning English. Therefore, by placing children's full linguistic repertoires at the centre, translanguage spaces respond to the strong version of translanguaging. The following section suggests six examples of how English teachers can implement the three translanguaging components in early years English language classrooms to purposefully combine the two versions of translanguaging.

3 Practical Applications

Translanguaging Rings

Teachers can use various strategies to construct translanguaging rings around individual children, such as codeswitching (Sanders-Smith & Dávila, 2019), translation (Gort & Pontier, 2013), bilingual recasting (Gort & Sembiante, 2015), enabling children to work in mini groups in their own languages (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017), and using video-stimulated recall (Morales & Rumenapp, 2017). English teachers can codeswitch or translate key words to check for understanding and provide clarification to ensure all children are engaged. Allowing children to collaborate with peers that speak the same L1 provides them with opportunities to help each other and share learning outcomes in their L1(s). Bilingual recasting is another way to rephrase children's utterances in English to increase implicit learning (Long, 2015) and teachers can apply these strategies as temporary scaffolding during both circle time and free play time with the goal of facilitating children’s English language learning.

Example 5.1 illustrates how the English teacher, after telling a story about things a little girl likes to do with her mum, uses small groups as a technique to build a translanguaging ring in order to scaffold language learning for Chinese–English emergent children in China.

Example 5.1 (Shi, 2018):

1	Teacher	I want you to have a think. What are some lovely things you do with your mummy? And make everything feel right. Make you feel really happy. And now you are going to turn to your partner. Tell your partner about it. And you can tell your partner in Mandarin or English. What do you like to do with your mummy? Here you go.
2	Yang	((turns to his partner Mat)) Wǒ māmā dài wǒ gēgē gēn wǒ qù mǎi iPad. [my mom took my brother and me to buy an iPad.]
3	Teacher	(After the group discussion) Matt, what does Yang like to do with his mom?
4	Matt	Buy iPad.
5	Teacher	Buy an iPad. ((looking at Yang)) you go shopping together ((Yang nods his head))

In this translanguaging ring, the teacher utilises the children’s L1 as a resource to reinforce language learning by alternating between Chinese and English. Knowing that some children such as Yang, who recently joined the class would experience difficulties in using English only, the teacher explicitly encourages the children to tell their partners what they like to do with their mum in their L1 (line 1). In line 2, Yang tells his partner in Chinese that he likes shopping for an iPad with his mum. Then in line 3, the teacher asks Matt to report what Yang told him in English and she repeats Matt’s answer in English to reinforce the English input. In this translanguaging ring, the alternating use of Chinese and English enables Yang to participate in the activity without any hindrance and increases Yang’s learning opportunity when his partner and the teacher repeat what he says in English.

Video-stimulated recall is another strategy an English teacher can use to construct translanguaging rings to engage bilingual children in learning. When bilingual children talk to their peers during play time or during an assigned task, they tend to use their L1. English teachers can use a digital device to record children’s speech during these activities and then they can ask children to watch the video and encourage them to talk about the conversations they had in the recording in English. The recall activity enables children to first clarify their thoughts and ideas without worrying about which language they are using and then deliberately express these thoughts and ideas in English. The video-stimulated recall strategy not only expands children's English learning opportunities, but it also increases their metalinguistic awareness through the receptive or productive use of English and their L1 (Morales & Rumenapp, 2017).

Example 5.2 shows how an English teacher uses video-stimulated recall strategies to engage five-year-old children in a translanguaging ring at a preschool in Illinois, USA. After sharing Eric Carle's picturebook, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* in English, the teacher first asks the children to work together on a task related to the story. When the children work collaboratively on this task, they use Spanish, English, and gestures. The teacher video recorded the children's conversations and after they finish, the teacher shows the children the video of themselves. She guides their attention to the moment when a boy called Diego speaks to another child called Catarina in Spanish.

Example 5.2 (Morales & Rumenapp, 2017, p. 4):

1	Teacher	Ok, let's keep listening. I want to see how you guys work together and what you say to each other to get this job done so well.
2	Diego	Catarina. Dos están arriba.
3	Teacher	What did you just say?
4	Diego	I um. I told Catarina that, um, in the in the in the. um. the caterpillar and the stuff go on top.
5	Teacher	Ok. and do you remember what words you used to say that?
6	Diego	uh huh
7	Teacher	What did you say?
8	Diego	Catarina. están arriba
9	Teacher	And what does that mean?
10	Diego	Catarina, that caterpillar stuff is up, it's right there where everybody put it.

In this example, the teacher purposefully asks Diego to clarify what he said in Spanish in the video. He first tries to rephrase what he said in English but is unable to fully articulate this, so the teacher guides Diego back to his use of L1 in lines 5 and 7 as a detour towards his English production. This detour functions as a scaffold to enable the learner to organise his thoughts and ideas drawing on his bilingual repertoire. In line 10, Diego eventually clearly explains what he said in English and such language production does not result from direct teaching but is the result of the child’s own bilingual skills assisted by the translanguaging ring.

It is noteworthy that when teachers construct a translanguaging ring, they do not need to be fluent bilingual speakers who understand children’s L1(s). In both examples, the English teachers did not need to speak children’s L1(s). Instead, they used children’s bilingual skills as resources to provide scaffolding.

Translanguaging Assessments

Teachers who assess children from a translanguaging perspective can create multilingual language profiles which document children’s language progression in English and their L1(s) (García et al., 2017). Teachers can also adapt informal story-telling assessments (Bauer et al., 2020) which enable young bi/multilinguals to use their full linguistic repertoires to tell stories about their life experiences. In Pino’s (2019) study, conducted in a bilingual Spanish/English kindergarten in a New York suburb, a five-year-old Dominican-American girl called Gina accomplishes a writing task with the use of codeswitching. Gina uses two Spanish words in her writing: ‘mofongo’, which is a dish without an English word equivalent and ‘cerveza’, which is Spanish for ‘beer’. Instead of seeing Gina’s codeswitching practice as a crutch for writing, the teacher recognised her translanguaging skills and creative capacity. When assessing Gina’s writing, the teacher recognises the child’s metalinguistic awareness and the language and cultural backgrounds embedded in Gina’s written text through a translanguaging lens. She appreciates that Gina was able to co-construct her identity in her writing and negotiate meaning. The teacher’s stance enables her to evaluate Gina’s writing not based on her English skills alone; such use of translanguaging assessment bridges bilingual skills and life experiences with writing to obtain a fuller picture of the child’s linguistic and academic development.

The key purpose of translanguaging assessment is therefore that of allowing bi/multilingual children to use any linguistic features in their speaking and writing tasks. Thus, the employment of any language other than English would not be assessed as a deficiency, but rather seen as a demonstration of who the children are and what they truly know.

Translanguaging Spaces

In a translanguaging space, English teachers relinquish the sole focus on children's English competence and instead, place children's bi/multilingualism at the centre of their teaching. Teachers can use various ways to create translanguaging spaces in early years classrooms (see Gort & Sembiante, 2015; Leung, 2019). For example, teachers can empower children to use their own languages or a mixture of their L1(s) and English to talk about things they are interested in during a show-and-tell activity, to talk about their life experiences during formal or informal teacher–learner interactions. Teachers can position themselves as learners in respect to children's L1(s) to build rapport as well as to use a variety of creative arts such as painting (Bradley et al., 2017) or dual language picturebooks (Ibrahim, 2020) to engage children in both their language and literacy development.

The following examples show how English teachers create translanguaging spaces to promote emergent bilingual children's English language development while also creating a safe space for them to develop their bilingual skills and identities. The first example is from Pino's (2019) study, in which the English teacher opens a translanguaging space for a young Nicaraguan-American child called Katy to talk about life experiences in both English and her L1. The conversation between them occurs during free play time. When the teacher realises that Katy looks very sad, she decides to share a picturebook by Yuri Morales, *Just a Minute* with her. Their conversation started from talking about the grandmother character in the story and moved on to talking about Katy's personal life experiences.

Example 5.3 (Pino, 2019, p. 64):

1	Teacher	Yes, she blows very hard. Why?
2	Katy	She has to turn off the candles. Hay muchas! [There are a lot!]
3	Teacher	Claro! If she doesn't blow out all those candles her wish might not come true! Si no, no se le cumple el deseo! Her wish. What do you think she wished for?
4	Katy	She no want go with la calavera. She want stay with her family.
5	Teacher	Right. Why?

6	Katy	Porque cuando uno se mujere, ya no ve a su familia. Solo del cielo y lloran. Como mi Tío. [When one dies, you no longer see your family. Only from the sky, and you cry. Like my uncle.]
7	Teacher	Puede ser…Katy, I'm so proud of you!
8	Katy	(gives the teacher a huge hug)

In this translanguaging space, the teacher places Katy at the centre of the interaction and uses language as a tool to build connections between herself and Katy and between the picturebook characters and the child's personal experiences. She not only allowed Katy to translanguage freely; she also personally modelled bilingualism by alternating her language choices. In the excerpt above, Katy tackles some rather complex topics by translanguaging and draws on a range of linguistic features and modes to maximise communicative potential. By mixing Spanish and English, Katy was able to access her knowledge and make connections between the story and her life experiences. Without the space to translanguage, Katy's 'thoughts would remain incomplete or since, she was a very cautious student, perhaps would have remained unsaid' (Pino, 2019, p. 64).

The next example in Fig. 5.1 is from Leung's (2019) study conducted in an English language classroom at a preschool in Hong Kong which shows that translanguaging does not exist only as a verbal practice. Young children can use visual language, along with translanguaging to share their ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

Example 5.4 (Leung, 2019, p. 57):

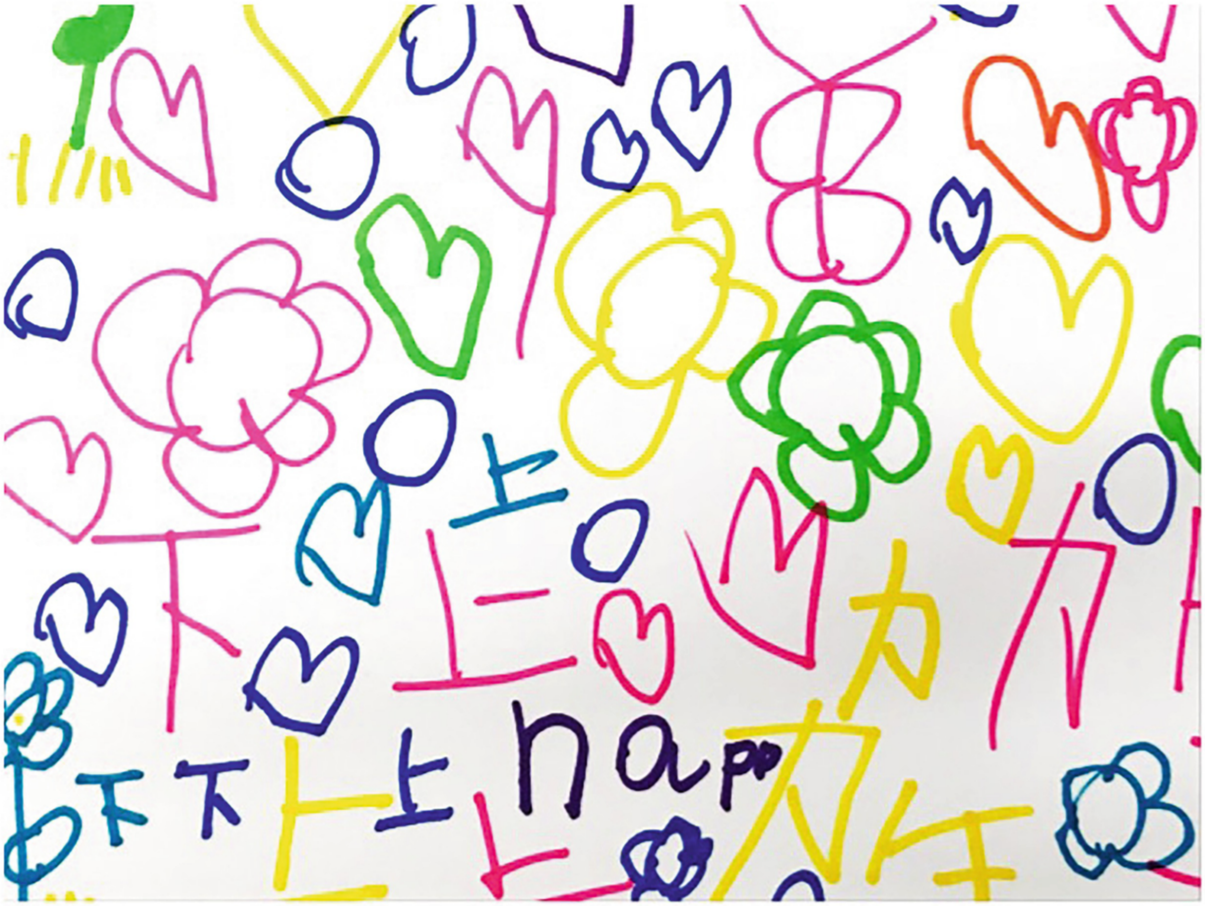

Fig. 5.1 Drawing ‘Happy birthday’ by a bilingual kindergartener in Hong Kong

This picture was drawn by a bilingual Cantonese–American child living in Hong Kong. Besides drawing several flowers and hearts, he has also creatively placed the Chinese characters ‘on’ ( ), ‘under’ ( ), ‘force’ ( ), ‘health’ ( ) and some English letters such as ‘h’ ‘a’ ‘p’ ‘B’ into the drawing in a style emulating graphic design. The Chinese characters as ‘lines’ represented in the picture are visually consistent with the outlined objects. The child is able to use the linguistic features at his disposal to draw, design, and communicate through drawing. English teachers can therefore construct a translanguaging space for children to connect their bilingual skills with visual arts to demonstrate their knowledge in both languages and their creativity.

Teachers aiming to develop translanguaging spaces can also use dual language picturebooks which tell stories in two languages (Domke, 2018). Studies have found that reading dual language picturebooks with young children can support their cultural and linguistic identities and promote language and literacy development as well as introduce them to real-world issues through fictitious but familiar characters (Ibrahim, 2020). Furthermore, Daly (2018) argues that dual language picturebooks reflect a translanguaging approach in which multilingual speakers mix codes and learn languages from their peers while Ibrahim (2020) emphasises that a dual language picturebook in the English classroom not only serves as a resource to support the learning of both languages, but it also helps young children to develop understanding of the complex, multidimensional, and dynamic nature of multilingualism.

A study by Hu et al. (2012) offers a useful example of using dual language picturebooks in ELT to expand children's bilingualism. The authors worked for eight weeks with five Chinese children who are emergent Chinese–English bilinguals and presented them with four dual language (Chinese and English) picturebooks and conducted two different story-sharing and booktalk sessions for each book. During the first session, the teacher focused on the Chinese version of the story and the second session was predominately conducted in English using the English version of the book. There were five steps in each session (see Table 5.1) and the children could use both languages to express themselves during both sessions. The dual language picturebook bridged the linguistic and cultural gap between English and Chinese as the results show that the children were highly engaged and able to make text-to-self and text-to-text connections. In addition, pre-test and post-test comparison shows significant improvements in children's literacy skills in both languages such as word identification, invented spelling, and creating story plots.

Example 5.5 (Hu et al., 2012):

Table 5.1 Activities in the two sessions

	Session 1 (Dominated by Chinese)	**Session 2 (Dominated by English)**
1	Present the picturebook and ask children to comment in Chinese or codeswitching	Read aloud the book in English
2	Ask children to construct a story in Chinese or codeswitching based on the pictures	Review the key words in English using flashcards
3	Read aloud the Chinese text in the book	Ask children to summarise the story in Chinese or codeswitching
4	Ask children to comment on their version of the story and the story the teacher read	Ask children to summarise the story in English or codeswitching

	Session 1 (Dominated by Chinese)	**Session 2 (Dominated by English)**
5	Teach key vocabulary words in both Chinese and English	Encourage children to spell out the key words in English

Using dual language picturebooks to construct a translanguaging space can help English teachers activate children’s cultural and linguistic knowledge. Children are free from language restriction and are encouraged to display their bilingual capabilities regardless their L1 (s). Also, in a translanguaging space, if bilingual children see that their home language(s) and English are presented together within a picturebook, this valorises their home language(s) by the dominant group who are generally in control (Daly, 2018). Therefore, the use of dual language picturebooks challenges a linguistic hierarchy that persistently positions English as a superior language.

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4 Conclusion

Early years English language education needs to better reflect children’s dynamic language-learning processes and must be re-envisioned in ways that include expanded possibilities for linguistic and cultural diversity. Young children communicate and learn in novel and creative ways by drawing on multiple semiotic resources, including language, body movement, and pointing to other signs and symbols (Morales & Rumenapp, 2017). The transformative potential of translanguaging pedagogies can help English teachers create a classroom that responds to children’s dynamic language-learning processes and their linguistic and cultural differences. In line with Weber’s (2014) suggestion that translanguaging can only lead to cognitive, affective, and social benefits if it is used with reflection, this chapter advocates that a teacher’s implementation of translanguaging pedagogies should follow evidence-based guidance and respond to the *multilingual turn*.

Translanguaging pedagogies in early years English language classrooms need to additionally extend beyond using children’s L1(s) to teach English. Translanguaging should be consistently implemented in the classroom to interrupt language boundaries, challenge English superiority, validate children’s bi/multilingual identities and develop their metalinguistic awareness and creativity. To that end, this chapter has shared strategies for teachers to construct a translanguaging English classroom with three translanguaging components. As illustrated in Fig. 5.2, translanguaging rings afford emergent bi/multilingual children the assistance needed to learn English. Translanguaging assessments provide important information about young bi/multilingual children's linguistic progress through a translanguaging lens while translanguaging spaces give children the freedom to perform their linguistic creativity.

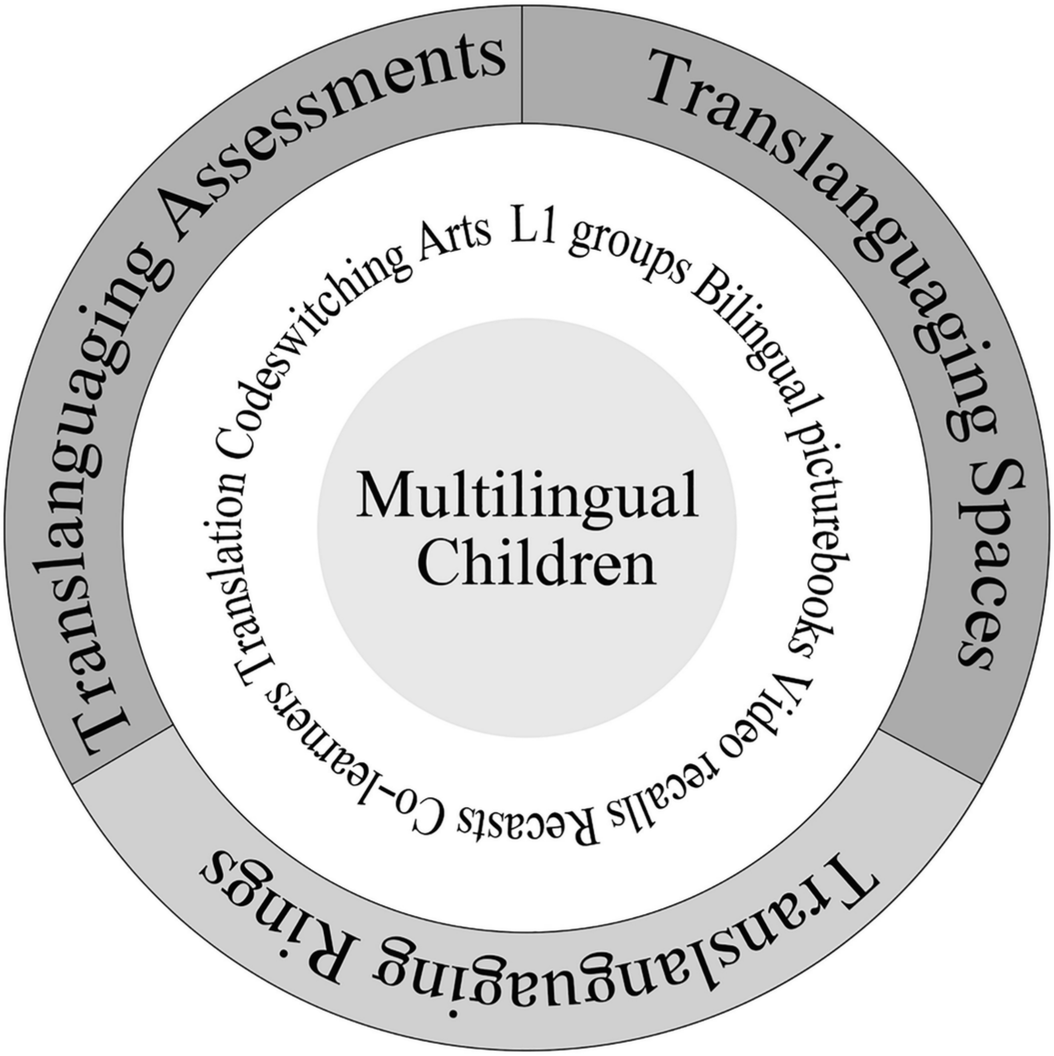
Translanguaging Assessments
Translanguaging Spaces
Translanguaging Rings
Codeswitching Arts L1 groups Bilingual picturebooks Video recalls Recasts Co-learners Translation
Multilingual Children

Fig. 5.2 Translanguaging strategies and three components of a translanguaging classroom

Using the three translanguaging components to implement translanguaging pedagogies addresses the importance of learning English while still acknowledging and developing the unitary language system of bi/multilingual children. Within these three translanguaging components, English teachers can employ the translanguaging strategies illustrated in the earlier examples, including codeswitching, translation, bilingual recast, becoming co-learners with children, forming small L1 groups, and using visual art, video-simulated recall, and dual language picturebooks to facilitate language teaching in the early years classroom. Constructing the three translanguaging components systematically and circularly in early years English language settings enables teachers to return the focus to bi/multilingual children, not solely on teaching English (García, 2017), which is essential for young bi/multilingual children's language development and linguistic identity formation.

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6. Developing Primary English Learners' Visual Literacy for a Multimodal World

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Keywords Primary English language teaching – Visual literacy – Visual literacy inquiry – Multiliteracies – Critical literacy

1 Introduction

Visual literacy (VL) is an integral part of becoming literate in any language. Simply put, visual literacy is the ability to construct meaning from images. John Debes has been credited with coining the term 'visual literacy' in 1968, referring to the strategies and skills used to make sense of visual images. Since then, newer definitions have expanded the concept to include 'the abilities to read and write images, that is to understand images, interpret images, use and create images, as well as to think and learn in terms of images' (Avgerinou, 2009, p. 29).

English Learners Need More Than Text Literacy

The teaching of text literacy has tended to dominate primary English language education around the globe for decades, that is, enabling children to read and write letters, words, sentences, paragraphs, and various types of written genres (e.g., stories, folktales, poems, dialogues, informational texts). However, twenty-first century English learners need more than text literacy (Serafini, 2014) because we live in a multimodal world where communication is not solely text-based. Multimodal literally means multiple modes, so communication combines linguistic with visual, audio, gestural, and spatial modes of meaning (Kress, 2003), which are increasingly integrated in everyday media and cultural practices (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). While a focus on multimodality may appear novel in ELT teacher education, as James Paul Gee (2014) highlights, ‘Multimodality is the rage today and the ‘new new thing.’ But, it seems new only because we linguists have done such a poor job analysing language. We treat language as words and grammar. But language has never been unimodal’ (p. xi). In fact, in children’s everyday lives, they rarely encounter written text that is not integrated with images, such as in picturebooks, magazines, billboards, posters, memes, GIFs, videos, and TikToks.

Visual Literacy Must Be Learned

Like textual literacy, VL skills do not inherently develop with age and experience and need to be learned and developed through formal education (Brumberger, 2011; Lopatovska et al., 2018). Even if English language teachers use images frequently to help make new language comprehensible, merely exposing learners to visual information does not necessarily develop VL (Brumberger, 2011). Learning to read and write text is considered fundamental to formal education and is often the focus of primary ELT; however, VL is not and is rarely introduced to children at the same age as textual literacy (Lopatovska et al., 2018). To address the need for integration of VL in formal literacy instruction for children, more specifically in ELT, a more robust pedagogical framework is required to develop VL in the primary English language classroom.

Visual Literacy for Primary English Learners

Despite the ubiquitous exposure to images in children’s daily lives (e.g., movies, magazines, advertisements, memes in social media) as well as primary English language instruction (e.g., photographs, videos, flashcards, picturebooks), many aspects of visual literacy and multimodality have not been addressed adequately in the field of ELT (Donaghy & Xerri, 2017). An exception to this in primary ELT is the increasing use of picturebooks with children at the pre-primary and primary school levels. With over four decades of integration of picturebooks to teach English as an additional language to children and robust development of approaches through communities of practice like Picturebooks in European Primary English Language Teaching (PEPELT) (see pepelt21.com), there has been extensive exploration of using these as authentic multimodal texts in ELT (Mourão, 2016).

However, the development of VL through the use of photographs and other types of authentic real-world multimodal texts (e.g., memes, GIFs, infographics, advertisements) in ELT has still not been adequately explored for children at the primary school level. To address the need for integration of VL in ELT as well as in formal literacy instruction for children, this chapter focuses specifically on developing VL in the English language classroom, providing innovative practices for primary school age learners (6–12 years old). The goal is to increase the use of real-world images and multimodal texts in the English language classroom by enhancing teachers' abilities to focus on visual literacy as an integral part of English language and literacy development.

2 Current Issues and Research

In order to understand how to apply visual literacy in ELT with primary aged learners, it is necessary to explore the theoretical foundations for multiliteracies and multimodal communication. This section will illuminate why learning to be literate in any language in the twenty-first century requires developing visual literacy and making sense of real-world visual texts and multimodal ensembles (Serafini, 2014). For a global language like English that is used for communication across cultures and across modalities, this becomes all the more important and simultaneously more complex. This will also be addressed in relation to teaching English to children.

Real-World Images and Multimodal Ensembles

Children encounter visual images constantly in their everyday lives. In the car or on the bus, children may see billboards or images in a store window with enticing advertisements. At the store, they can see magazines with different kinds of images on the covers, such as photographs or infographics, or colourful images on cereal boxes and confectionery wrappers. On the television, computer, or tablets, children are captivated by videos, cartoons, games, and commercials for toys and special in-app purchases geared just for them. With each billboard, store window, magazine cover, cereal box, sweets wrapper, video, cartoon, game, and commercial, there is often text that accompanies or is integrated into the image. Serafini (2014) describes these texts as multimodal ensembles, which are ‘text that combines written language, design elements, and visual images’ (p. 2) and gives examples, such as picturebooks, magazines, and advertisements. English language teachers should therefore help primary English learners to construct meaning from these real-world images inside the classroom to better support their ability to communicate more effectively in English in our multimodal world.

Visual Literacy as Part of a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

In the mid-1990s, the New London Group (1996) introduced the concept of using a pedagogy of multiliteracies which expanded the view of literacy by incorporating the concepts of cultural and linguistic diversity in increasingly globalized societies and multimodal communication particularly associated with new technologies. For English language educators, using a pedagogy of multiliteracies can ‘engage learners in rich and highly contextualized language learning by expanding their literacy repertoires to include the fuller range of communicational forms used in society (e.g., linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, tactile, and digital)’ (Rajendram, 2021, p. 154). Ellis (2018) further highlights the importance of challenging children through visual images (specifically those found in picturebooks) to develop emotional literacy by interpreting facial expressions, gestures, and body language as well as providing opportunities for children to develop their intercultural literacy and nature literacy when exposed to images representing diverse cultures or showing new images of nature respectively. The focus in this chapter on visual literacy is therefore an integral part of using a pedagogy of multiliteracies in ELT.

Visual Literacy as a Social Practice

Much like newer understandings of textual literacy, visual literacy has been influenced by sociocultural perspectives. Literacy practices are often described as what people *do* with literacy (Gee, 2014; Perry, 2012; Vasquez et al., 2019). Conceptualizing literacy as something one does rather than a skill or ability, one can help primary English language teachers understand the ways people engage with real texts and make literacy instruction meaningful and relevant for learners. VL is a social practice not just an individual, cognitively based ability or set of competencies and includes the broader sociocultural contexts in which images are embedded, and it addresses how *practices of looking* inform our lives and identities (Serafini, 2014; Sturken & Cartwright, 2001). Sturken and Cartwright (2001) explain that

> meanings are produced not in the heads of the viewers so much as through a process of negotiation among individuals within a particular culture, and between individuals and the artifacts, images, and texts created by culture, and between individuals and the artifacts, images, and texts created by themselves and others. (p. 4)

This aspect of VL becomes more complex in the English language classroom where materials using real-world images can represent diverse, global perspectives.

Visual Literacy as Critical Inquiry

Visuals are embedded in sociocultural contexts and being visually literate means making sense of images and analysing visual messages from a critical perspective. Learners of English at primary school should be gradually enabled to interpret a visual image, including the exploration of its social impact, understanding its purpose, audience, and ownership, and making judgements regarding its accuracy and validity (Bamford, 2003). Rose (2001) encourages the use of critical visual methodology which is

> an approach that thinks about the visual in terms of the cultural significance, social practices and power relations in which it is embedded; and that means thinking about the power relations that produce, are articulated through, and can be challenged by, ways of seeing and imaging. (p. 3)

Based on Vasquez et al.’s (2019) recommendations on critical literacy, primary English language teachers can apply a critical orientation or lens to all real-world visual texts presented in class, such as photographs, advertisements, billboards, or even sweets wrappers. This critical visual literacy approach assumes that all texts are constructed from a particular perspective and are never neutral (Vasquez et al., 2019).

Being able to develop the skills to think critically about images and interpret these deeper meanings is an essential part of being visually literate. For example, learners can be taught to interpret images in an advertisement with a critical lens. Although young, primary aged learners can understand that a commercial showing a lot of young, smiling children with phones enjoying themselves purposely creates an image that all children have phones and their lives are happy, thereby urging them to buy a phone. Learners can learn how to examine who created the commercial, what their purpose is, and why they chose images of certain children for the commercial in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, race, body type, and clothing.

3 Practical Applications

In this section, ideas will be shared to help primary English language teachers engage children in visual literacy activities in English. Because primary English learners are obtaining information increasingly in visual ways that accompany text, they need skills for the twenty-first century which include visual literacy as an integral part of multimodal communication. These practical applications will focus on authentic (or authentic-like) real-world images and multimodal ensembles.

Serafini's (2014) Exposure-Exploration-EngagementFramework

A valuable framework to shape integration of visual literacy into primary ELT is Serafini's (2014) three-phase curricular framework:

> *Exposure*: exposing learners to a wide variety of visual images and/or a particular multimodal ensemble.
> *Exploration*: exploring the designs, features, and structures of various visual images and particularly multimodal ensembles.
> *Engagement*: engaging in the production and/or interpretation of a particular visual image and/or multimodal ensembles. (Serafini, 2014, p. 92)

Adapted from these three phases, here follow three key pedagogical principles for building visual literacy in primary English language teaching.

Pedagogical Principle #1: Expose Children to a Wide Variety of Real-World Visual Images and Multimodal Ensembles

Incorporate More Real-World Visual Images from Around the World Children are still constructing their understanding of the world around them and therefore, educators can connect children to concepts through visuals and expose them to images around the world simultaneously. Since they will be using English for global communication that is also increasingly visual, primary English learners should have exposure to images from around the world. For example, in Fig. 6.1, when introducing lexical sets of colours, instead of showing flashcards with the colours or the typical picture of an apple to teach ‘red’ and banana to teach ‘yellow’, teachers can instead, expand children’s understanding of the world by using a colourful image with a field of wildflowers that naturally includes target colour items. Teachers could also find a photo of colourful houses from different countries, as in Fig. 6.1, which shows a row of houses in Italy that can interest children in another part of the world while learning pink, blue, green, orange, and red. Connecting English lexis with the image of wildflowers or houses can increase engagement, introduce the world through image, and make the learning of the lexis and concepts much more memorable.

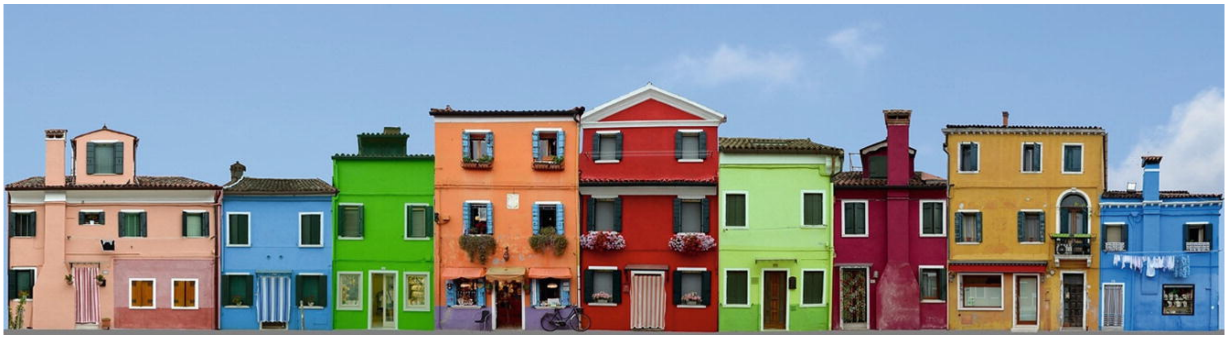


Fig. 6.1 Using real-world images to teach lexis. (Image by Pixaline from Pixabay)

Educators can also connect children to people around the world through images. Figure 6.2 shows a girl celebrating Holi, a festival in India where people throw powder and cover each other in bright colours. With an engaging real-world photograph, educators can show children aspects of another part of the world and culture while teaching the names of colours.

This strategy not only makes the words comprehensible but also evokes a personalized response or feeling.

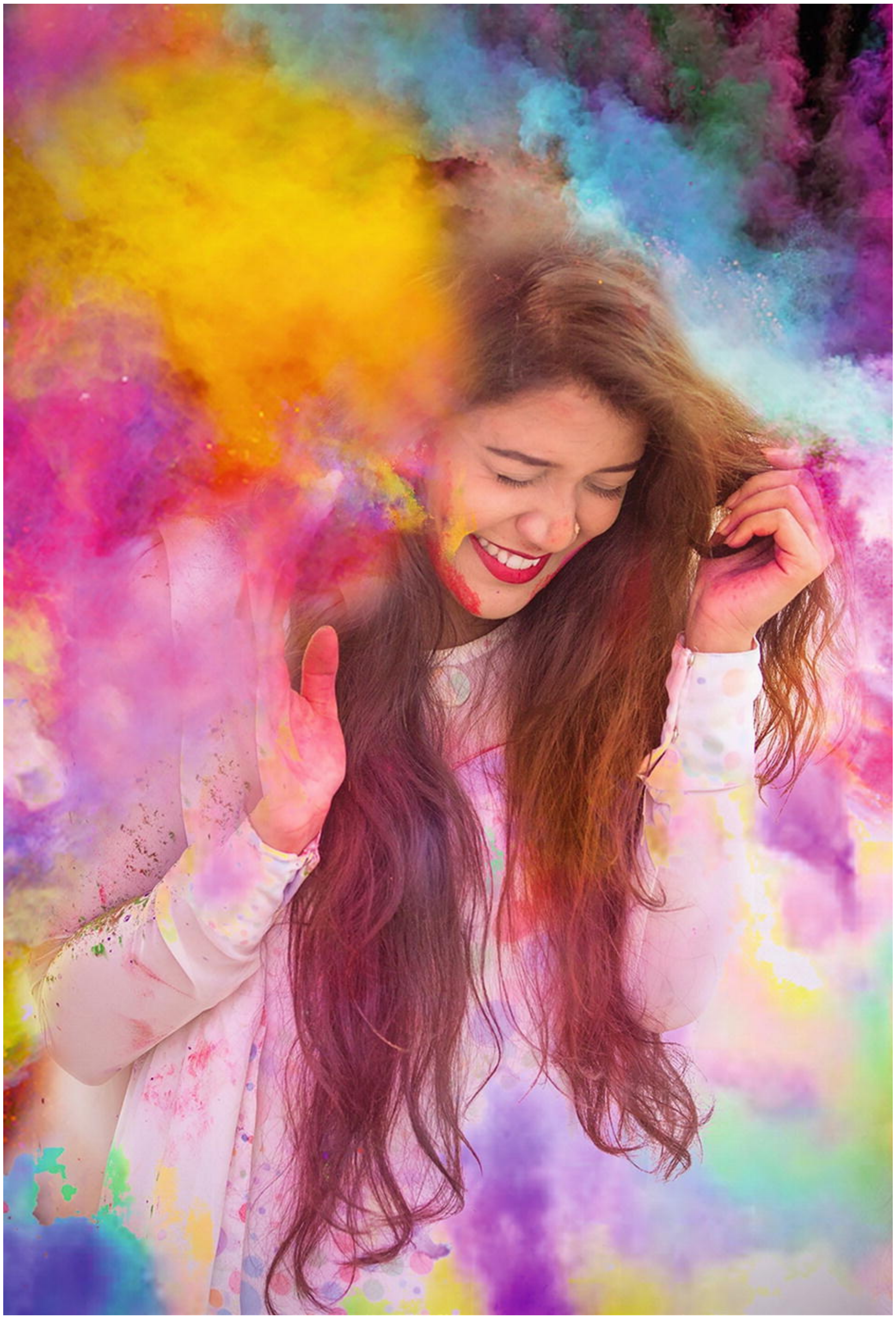


Fig. 6.2 Using real-world images representing diverse cultures to teach lexis. (Photo by Bulbul Ahmed on Unsplash)

Exposing children to images of diverse people and cultures from around the world can also enable children to build a global perspective of who English speakers are instead of perpetuating the stereotypical view of English speakers as ethnically white and located in the United States or United Kingdom.

Use a Wide Variety of Real-World Multimodal Ensembles Children should have multiple opportunities to encounter texts as they occur in the real world and authentic communication. For example, it is becoming increasingly common to communicate in memes, especially on social media and amusing memes created using an eye-catching photograph with simple text like the one in Fig. 6.3 are popular. This meme was created to teach children an expression in English '*I'm all ears*' using a child-friendly image of the teacher's pet dog. Teachers can easily create memes like this using free online meme generators (e.g., kapwing.com, iloveimg.com, canva.com) or by simply typing text on an image using Microsoft Word or PowerPoint and children also enjoy creating their own memes in English.

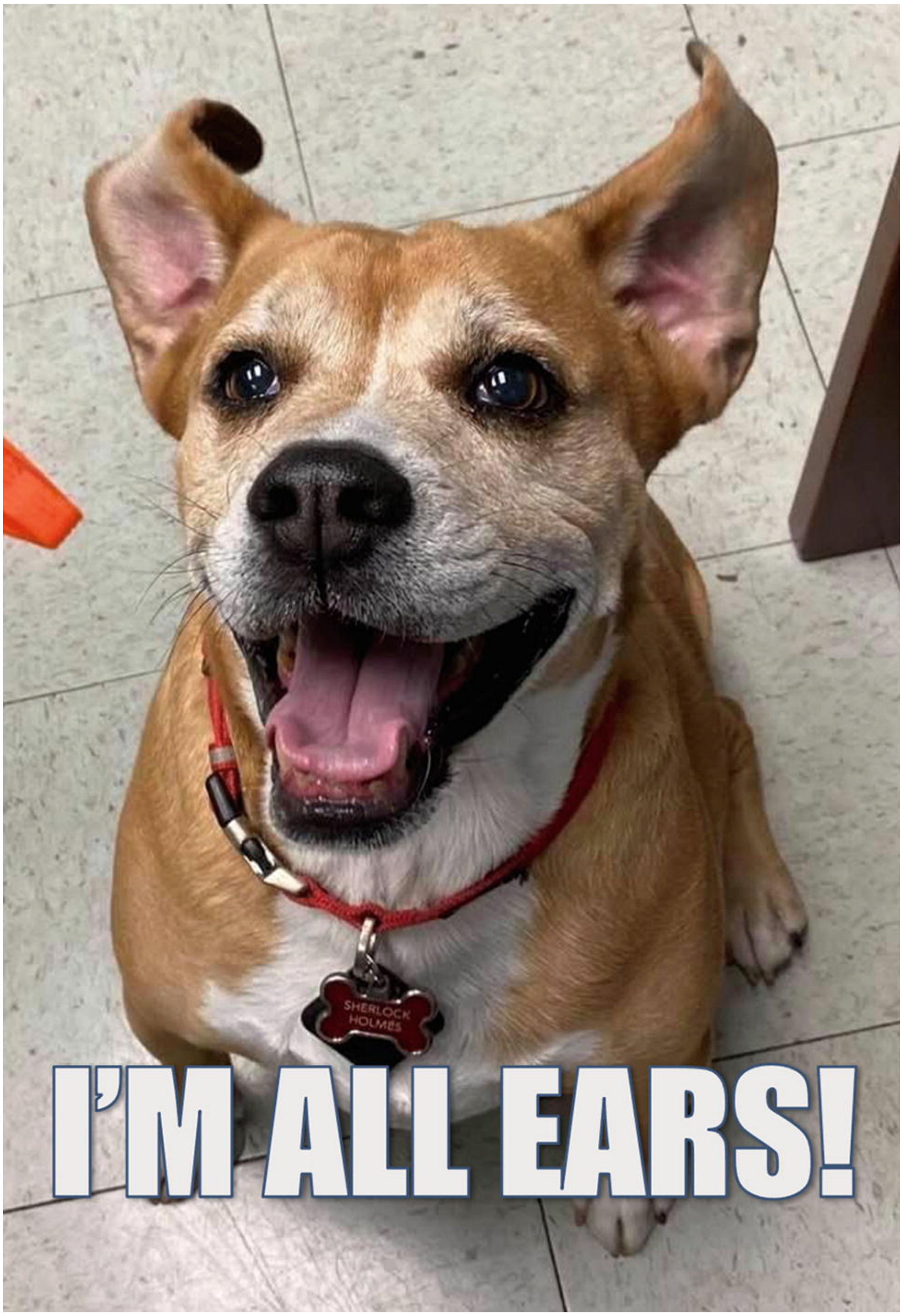


Fig. 6.3 Using memes as real-world examples of multimodal ensembles. (Image by Joan Kang Shin)

Another multimodal format frequently used to communicate information is the infographic, which is a digital and visual representation of data (Pegrum et al., 2018). Infographics are frequently featured in magazine articles, posters, and on social media and used to attract people's interest and share ideas visually. Figure 6.4 shows an infographic about animal testing, which could be used in an upper-primary series of English lessons with learners aged ten to twelve years about caring for animals. This is a useful example of building visual literacy as part of information or data literacy by encouraging learners to interpret the charts as well as the creative use of animal silhouettes to represent the quantity of testing used on each animal. Learners can also ponder who may have created the infographic and suggest why.

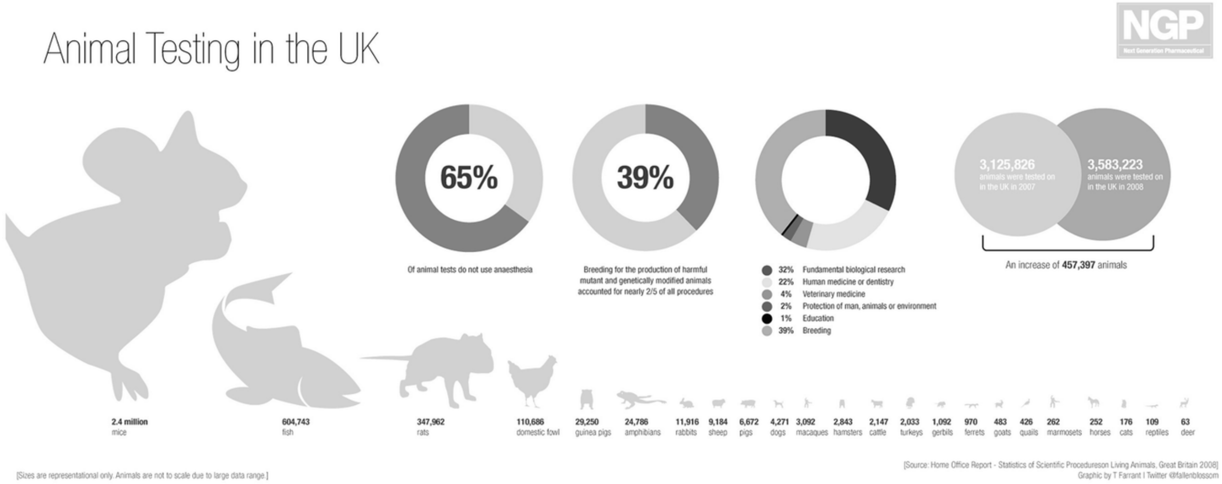
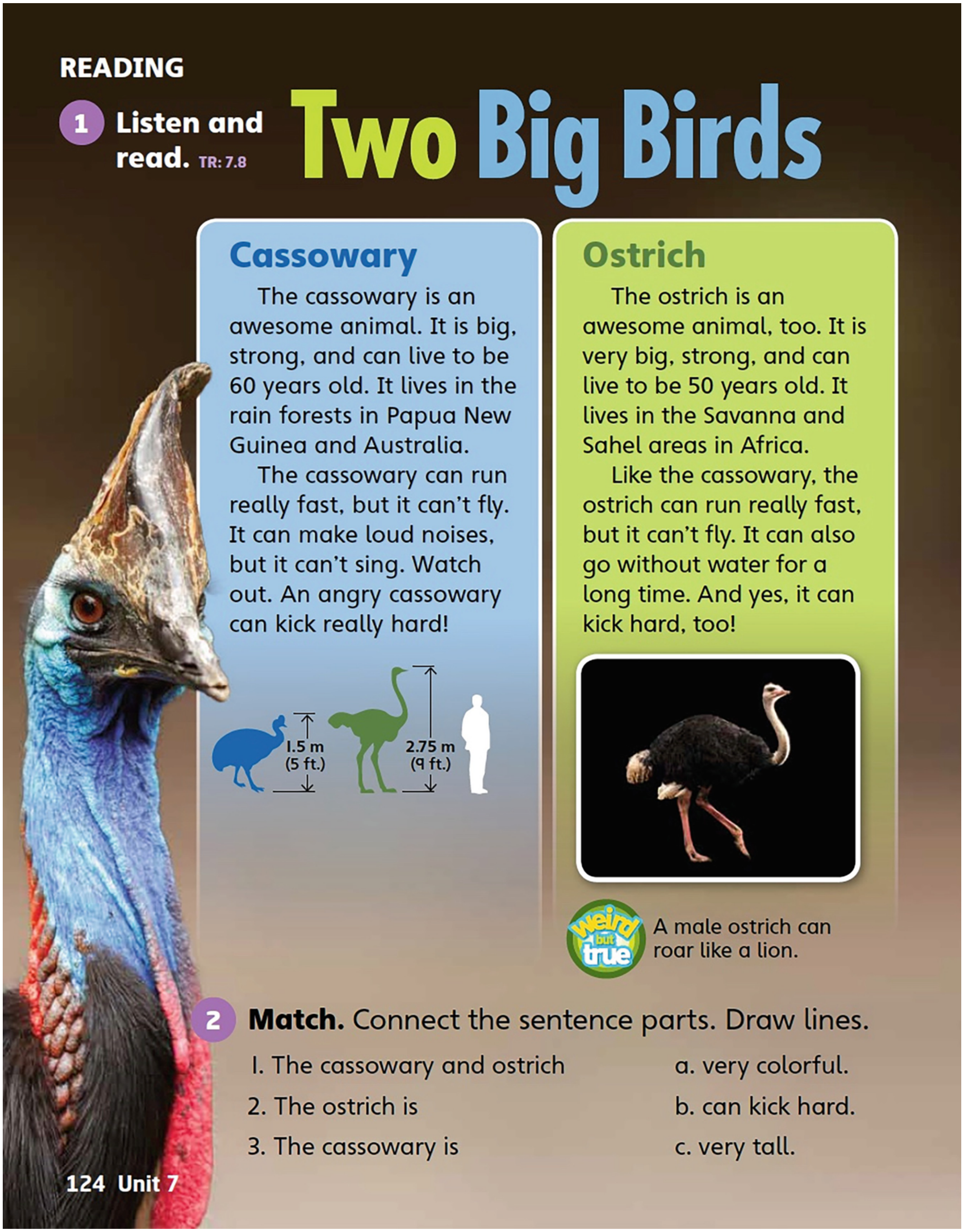


Fig. 6.4 Using infographics as examples of real-world multimodal ensembles. (Animal Testing in the UK by T Farrant licensed CC BY 2.0, via Flickr)

Informational texts are important everyday multimodal communication that primary English language teachers should incorporate into their instruction. Although children may not be reading print or digital news and magazine articles, as they progress through the primary school years, when aged six to twelve years, they should be equipped with the critical reading skills and strategies required for accessing real-world informational texts. Therefore, primary English language educators should simulate informational texts found in newspapers, magazines, or on the Internet that are designed like these with a combination of texts, photographs, drawings, and/or informational graphics. If primary learners become familiar with encountering such text types, they will be in a stronger position to develop reading skills and strategies needed to interpret these texts, including their visual literacy skills. Figure 6.5 shows a short article in an English language coursebook for children grades 2 and 3 (aged 7–8 years) about Two Big Birds. It aims to imitate authentic text through the use of text, colour, and the infographic in the middle of the page shows the size of a cassowary in comparison to an ostrich and a man. It is an accessible, visual way to communicate the size of these big birds. In addition, children are given the opportunity to see what these two big birds look like via the use of such photographs.



READING

1 Listen and read. TR: 7.8

Two Big Birds

Cassowary

The cassowary is an awesome animal. It is big, strong, and can live to be 60 years old. It lives in the rain forests in Papua New Guinea and Australia.

The cassowary can run really fast, but it can't fly. It can make loud noises, but it can't sing. Watch out. An angry cassowary can kick really hard!

1.5 m
(5 ft.)
2.75 m
(9 ft.)

Ostrich

The ostrich is an awesome animal, too. It is very big, strong, and can live to be 50 years old. It lives in the Savanna and Sahel areas in Africa.

Like the cassowary, the ostrich can run really fast, but it can't fly. It can also go without water for a long time. And yes, it can kick hard, too!

weird but true A male ostrich can roar like a lion.

2 **Match.** Connect the sentence parts. Draw lines.

1. The cassowary and ostrich	a. very colorful.
2. The ostrich is	b. can kick hard.
3. The cassowary is	c. very tall.

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Fig. 6.5 An example of an authentic-like multimodal text. (Excerpt from *Our World 2 Student's Book, Second Edition*, p. 124 (National Geographic Learning, 2020))

This is what Serafini (2014) would refer to as a multimodal ensemble, which is how information is presented, using text, image, and design features. The more primary English language learners encounter multimodal texts that mirror real-world authentic text types, the better they will be prepared for reading in the real world both now and in the future.

Pedagogical Principle #2: Engage Primary English Learners in Critically Interpreting Real-World Visual Images and Multimodal Ensembles

Create Routines for Visual Literacy Inquiry Primary English learners not only need to use visuals to help interpret text, they also need to learn to interpret the visuals themselves. Once diverse images that reflect the people, cultures, and places around the world as well as real-world multimodal ensembles have been selected in a principled manner, teachers can then help children learn to interpret these visual images. The goal is to develop children's abilities to interpret the images on their own and as children learn effectively with routines (Shin et al., 2021), primary English teachers can make visual literacy inquiry a routine whenever children encounter images. Harvard Project Zero (2019) promotes a visible thinking routine that is child-friendly and accessible. They describe it as a routine for exploring works of art and other interesting things via the following see-think-wonder sequence:

- What do you see?
- What do you think about that?
- What does it make you wonder?

This routine encourages learners to build a habit of approaching any image by asking those three simple questions and the goal is for learners to use this visible thinking routine independently when approaching any visual. However, if this is a new activity, teachers can scaffold learners by introducing them to the questions; for example, in a unit about houses for children in grades 2 and 3 (7–8 years old), teachers can spark curiosity at the beginning of the unit by using a photograph of an unusual house that would interest children, such as Happy Rizzi House (see Fig. 6.6).

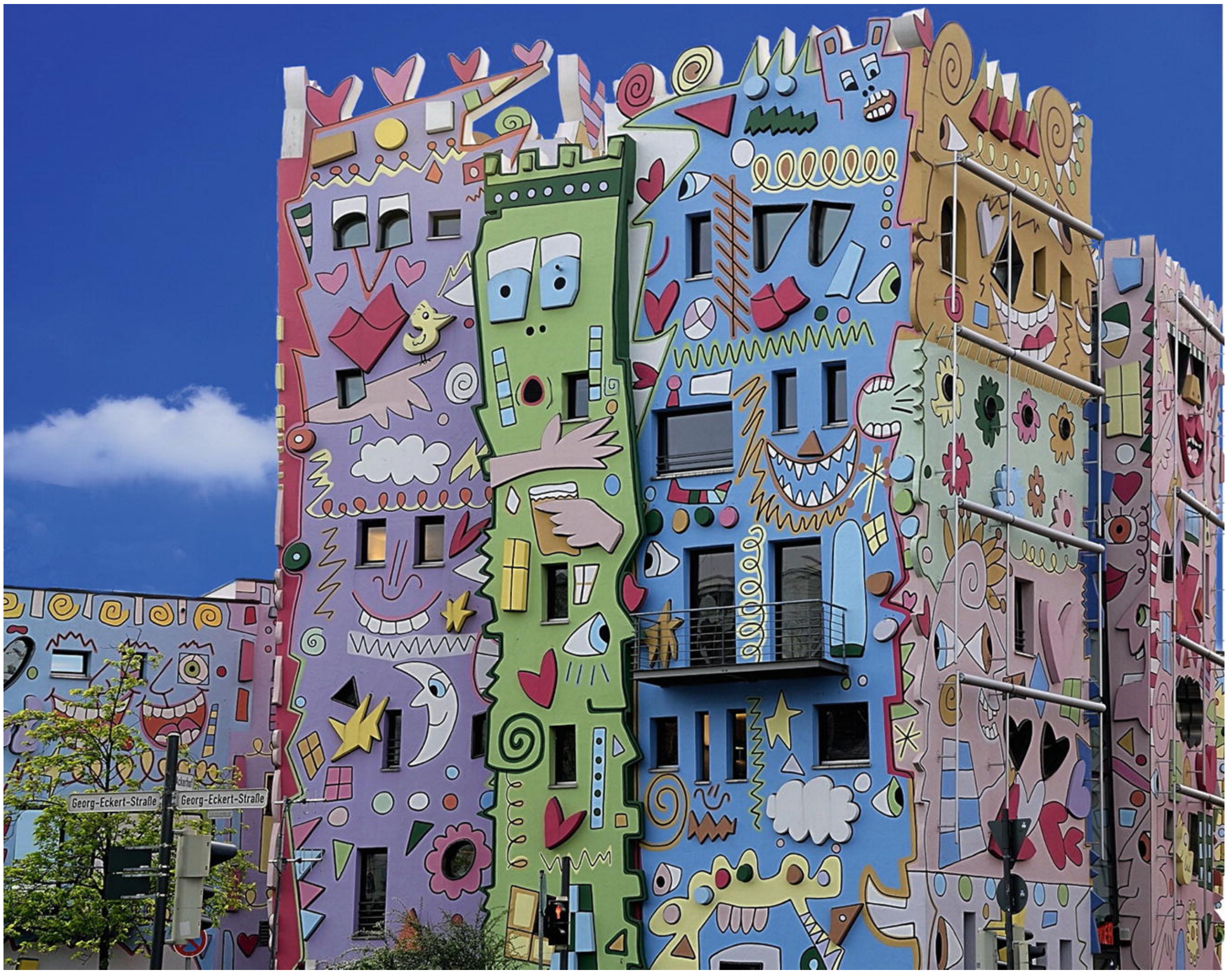


Fig. 6.6 Using Happy Rizzi House in Brunswick, Germany to spark dialogue. (Image by Hans Linde from Pixabay)

Until learners are used to the routine, teachers could use a ‘turn and talk with a partner’ activity after asking each question to build their confidence to answer these questions with the class. To scaffold their responses, this question and response frame could be displayed or written on the board:

Question	Response
What do you see?	I see…
What do you think about that?	I think…
What does it make you wonder?	I wonder…

Then learners turn to their partner to ask and answer questions, such as

What do you see?	I see eyes and faces.
What do you think about that?	I think it’s funny. I want to live there.

What does it make you wonder?	I wonder who lives there.

After all the learners have had an opportunity to ask and answer the questions, they turn back to the front. The teacher can collate the answers and write them on the board, which reinforces the questions, provides the learners an opportunity to share their answers with the class, and enables the teacher to provide feedback on ideas and language use.

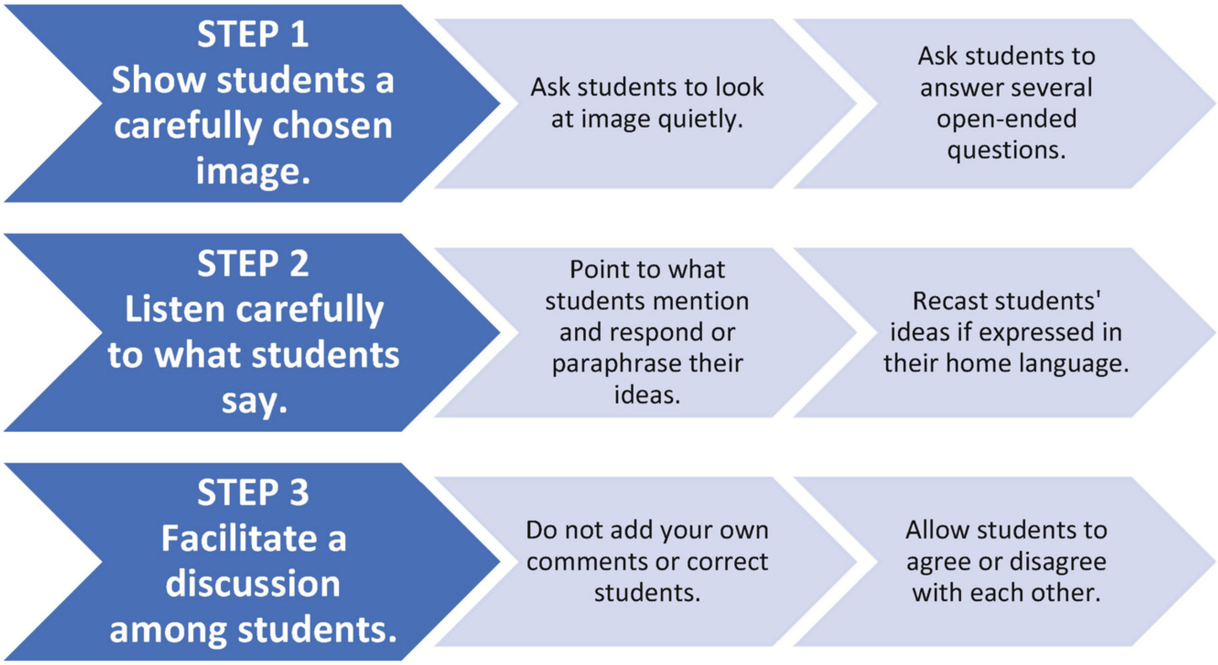
Gradually, learners will be more confident and better able to approach any visual by saying to themselves: ‘*I see… I think… I wonder…*’ and the goal is for them to be able to engage in visual thinking inquiry independently and in small groups, which promotes communication in English. As Harvard Project Zero (2019) maintains: ‘This routine encourages students to make careful observations and thoughtful interpretations. It helps stimulate curiosity and sets the stage for inquiry’ (p. 1).

Scaffold Discussion About Images Using Visual Thinking Strategies

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) reflect an inquiry-based teaching technique created by cognitive psychologist Abigail House and museum educator Philip Yenawine. Yenawine (2013) defines VTS as the use of art to teach ‘visual literacy, thinking, and communication skills’ (p. 19) and suggests using these three visual literacy questions that are open-ended and have no correct answers:

- What’s going on in this image?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can you find?

These are similar to the visible thinking routine explained above but use slightly more complex grammatical structures. Similarly, these questions can spark children’s curiosity in an image and thereby encourage critical thinking about it and as the goal is to encourage communication about an image, primary English teachers can use the Visual Thinking Strategies Process as a useful framework. Figure 6.7 shows this process in three main steps that teachers can use as a routine to encourage children to think critically and engage in discussions about an image.



STEP 1
Show students a carefully chosen image.

Ask students to look at image quietly.

Ask students to answer several open-ended questions.

STEP 2
Listen carefully to what students say.

Point to what students mention and respond or paraphrase their ideas.

Recast students' ideas if expressed in their home language.

STEP 3
Facilitate a discussion among students.

Do not add your own comments or correct students.

Allow students to agree or disagree with each other.

Fig. 6.7 Teaching routine for encouraging visual literacy inquiry and discussion

It is important for teachers to scaffold learners' ideas and expression by providing language support, including modelling useful task-related language and enabling children to use their own languages when needed. As the goal is to facilitate discussion, the learners should know there are no correct answers in a visual literacy inquiry and it is important to share this aim in accessible language, conveying that the purpose of these activities is to learn how to interpret images, talk about images, and communicate with peers about images more independently. Using the VTS process in Fig. 6.7, the teacher's actions will encourage participation and avoid correcting learners or telling them what to think. By using visual literacy inquiry as a routine, learners will develop confidence in asking and answering questions in English while simultaneously developing the ability to read visuals. After the VTS process becomes a routine, learners can then progress to leading their own VTS in small groups and eventually create their own questions to ask about a visual.

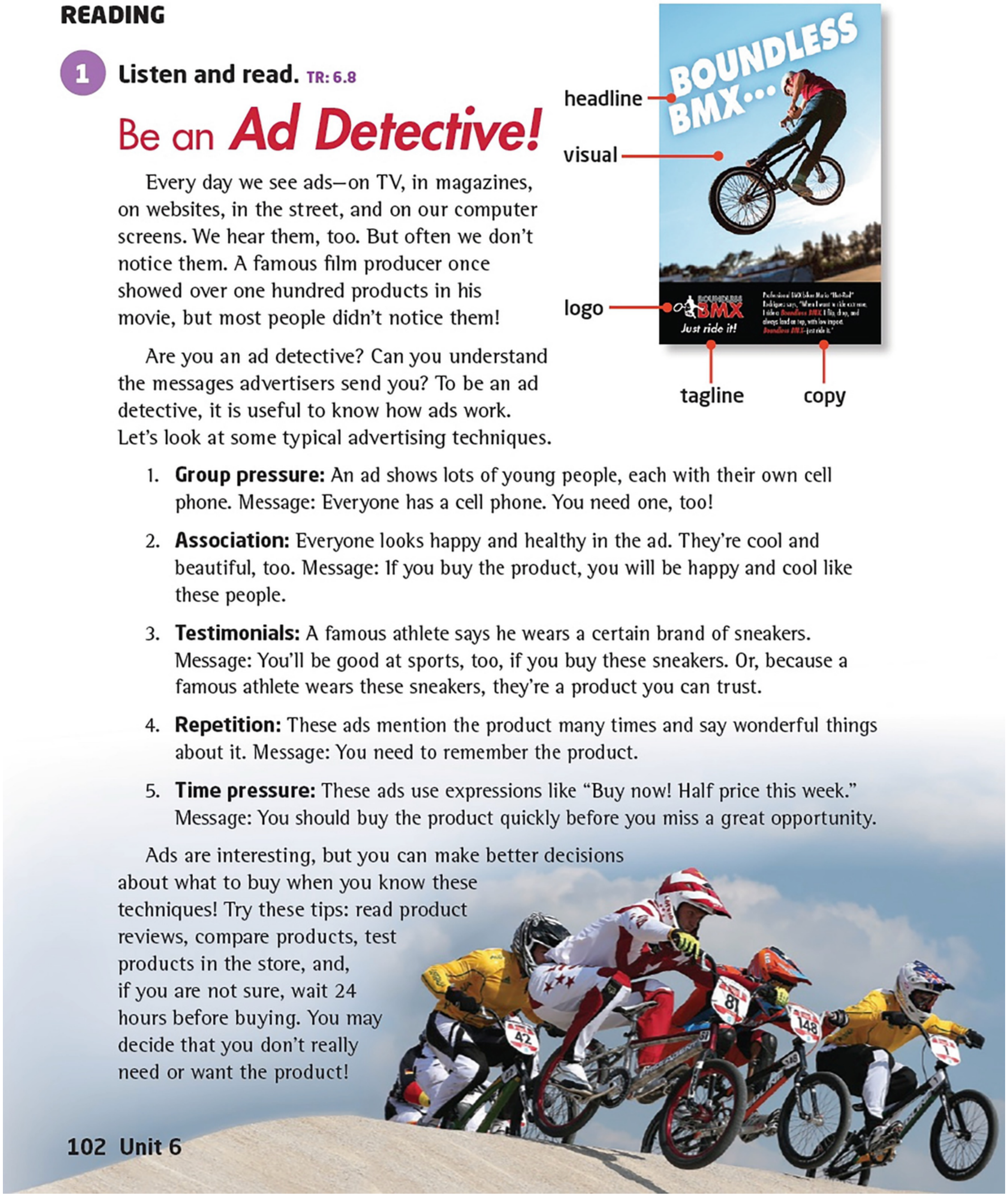
Expand the Question Types for Visual Literacy Inquiry When using the three-step visual literacy inquiry routine, the open-ended questions in Step 1 can be expanded once learners become familiar with the VTS questions or the See-Think-Wonder routine. As children develop cognitively and linguistically, they can also expand their repertoire of questions (see Table 6.1). Teachers should therefore plan lessons by considering the possible range of answers and ensuring questions are sufficiently open-ended in order to promote discussion about the image.

Table 6.1 Types of visual inquiry and questions (with graded language in brackets)

Type of Visual Inquiry	Possible questions
Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)	What's going on in this image? (What is happening in this image? What do you see that makes you say that? (What makes you say that?) What more can you find? (What else can you find?)
Visual Thinking Routine (See-Think-Wonder)	What do you see? What do you think about that? (What do you think?) What does it make you wonder? (What do you wonder?)
Five Ws	Who is in the image? What are they doing? When is it? Where is it? Why do you think so?
Personalized Inquiry	How does the image make me feel? What does it mean to me? Is this like my life?
Imaginative Inquiry	What is happening **now**? What happened **before**? What will happen **after**?

Enhance Learners' Critical Thinking Skills to Interpret Visual Images As children progress through the primary years, English language teachers need to go deeper with visual thinking by adopting a critical visual literacy approach. As mentioned in the previous section, visual literacy requires analysing visual messages from a critical perspective and interpreting the content of visual images based on the sociocultural context in which they are embedded. Questions can be asked about the content accuracy, validity, cultural significance, and power relations. This approach can help to enhance children's critical thinking skills in upper-primary English language classroom, scaffold their ability to interpret images through a critical lens while promoting communication.

Analysing advertising and the ways images are used to create messages is relevant to children’s lives and helps to build critical visual literacy. Figure 6.8 shows an informational text on this topic that raises upper primary learners’ (grades 5–6) awareness of why they are making certain decisions, such as what to purchase (or what to persuade their families to purchase). In this activity, children learn about different techniques advertisers use to convince people to purchase a product.


BOUNDLESS BMX...
headline
visual
logo
BOUNDLESS BMX
Just ride it!
tagline
copy

READING

1 Listen and read. TR: 6.8

Be an *Ad Detective!*

Every day we see ads—on TV, in magazines, on websites, in the street, and on our computer screens. We hear them, too. But often we don't notice them. A famous film producer once showed over one hundred products in his movie, but most people didn't notice them!

Are you an ad detective? Can you understand the messages advertisers send you? To be an ad detective, it is useful to know how ads work. Let's look at some typical advertising techniques.

1. **Group pressure:** An ad shows lots of young people, each with their own cell phone. Message: Everyone has a cell phone. You need one, too!
2. **Association:** Everyone looks happy and healthy in the ad. They're cool and beautiful, too. Message: If you buy the product, you will be happy and cool like these people.
3. **Testimonials:** A famous athlete says he wears a certain brand of sneakers. Message: You'll be good at sports, too, if you buy these sneakers. Or, because a famous athlete wears these sneakers, they're a product you can trust.
4. **Repetition:** These ads mention the product many times and say wonderful things about it. Message: You need to remember the product.
5. **Time pressure:** These ads use expressions like "Buy now! Half price this week." Message: You should buy the product quickly before you miss a great opportunity.

Ads are interesting, but you can make better decisions about what to buy when you know these techniques! Try these tips: read product reviews, compare products, test products in the store, and, if you are not sure, wait 24 hours before buying. You may decide that you don't really need or want the product!

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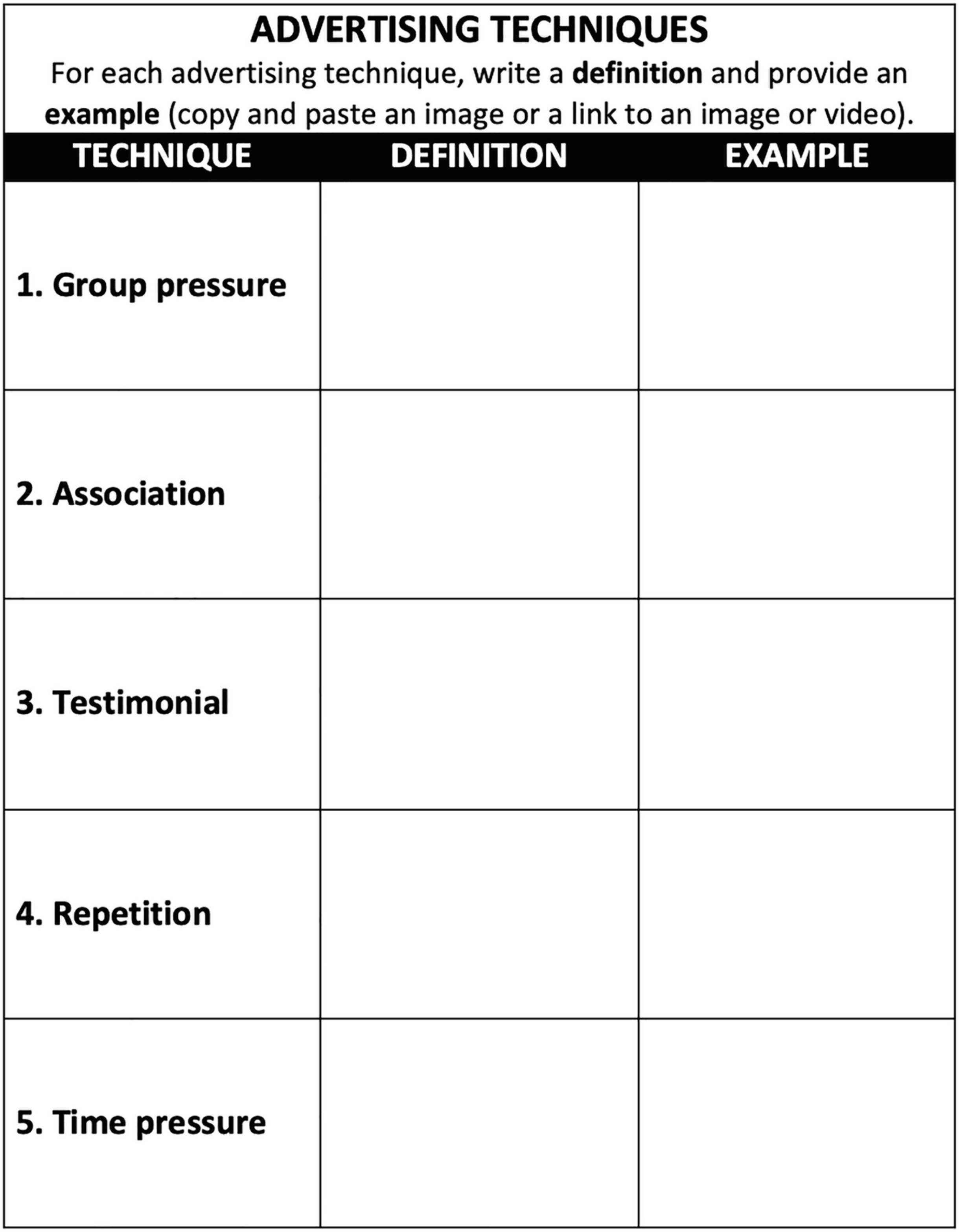
Fig. 6.8 Example of teaching critical inquiry through advertising techniques. (Excerpt from *Our World 6 Student's Book, Second Edition*, p. 102 (National Geographic Learning, 2020))

This text builds learners' critical literacy about advertisements they may see around them in order to help them improve their multimodal communication in English.

After reading, teachers can check learners’ understanding of the advertising techniques and engage them in inquiry about how images are used. This graphic organizer (see Fig. 6.9) can be a useful tool for learners to demonstrate their understanding of advertising techniques by writing a definition and providing an example for each technique. Depending on learners’ access to technology, they can cut out or copy an image of a print advertisement or provide a link to an image or video.



ADVERTISING TECHNIQUES

For each advertising technique, write a **definition** and provide an **example** (copy and paste an image or a link to an image or video).

TECHNIQUE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
1. Group pressure		
2. Association		
3. Testimonial		
4. Repetition		
5. Time pressure		

Fig. 6.9 Example of teaching critical inquiry through advertising techniques

After learners have collected various advertisements for this activity, teachers can select from the ensemble, then prompt the children to think critically about them. Furthermore, teachers could engage learners in a visual literacy inquiry using questions that encourage them to think critically about the advertisements as a multimodal ensemble, such as:

- What do you see in the ad?
- Who made the ad?
- Why was this ad made?
- Who is the ad for?
- What techniques does the ad use? (e.g., group pressure, association, testimonial, repetition, time pressure)
- Do you want to buy the product? Why?
- What kinds of people are in the ad?
- Do you see people like you?

Shin et al. (2021) provide an example of a fifth-grade class in Mexico that explored advertisements for sweets, cereals, and fast food for a series of lessons about healthy eating and junk food. The teacher collected a variety of advertisements geared towards children to help them recognize what kinds of images junk food advertisers use to attract those in their age group such as showing cute free toys that come with the food and children looking happy and excited. Before conducting a visual literacy inquiry about the ads, teachers could use an information gap activity to practise communicating about the advertisements in English.

Step 1: Collect print advertisements from magazines, newspapers, and supermarkets for sweets, chocolate, cookies, cereal, fast food. It is also possible to use screenshots from internet advertisements.
Step 2: Arrange the learners into A/B pairs.
Step 3: Learner A has a blank sheet of paper and Learner B has a print advertisement.
Step 4: Learner B describes the advertisement to Learner A without showing it. Learner A draws the advertisement by listening to Learner B.
Step 5: The pairs then compare the advertisement with Learner A’s drawing.
Step 6: Repeat the steps above with another advertisement by Learner B drawing and Learner A describing.

This enjoyable information gap activity will encourage children to use the lexis they have learned about junk food as well as descriptive lexis, such as colours, size, and other adjectives. In the example above, children in the

Mexico study described an advertisement for a sweet with a toy surprise using language such as:

> The boy has a round candy in his hand… It is blue. Next to the boy, there are four cars. One looks like a red Ferrari! The other cars are blue, green, and yellow. On the left there is a girl. She has a round candy in her hand. The candy is pink. Next to her, there are four dolls… The dolls have dresses. The dresses are pink, purple, silver, and white. (Shin, et al., 2021, p. 81)

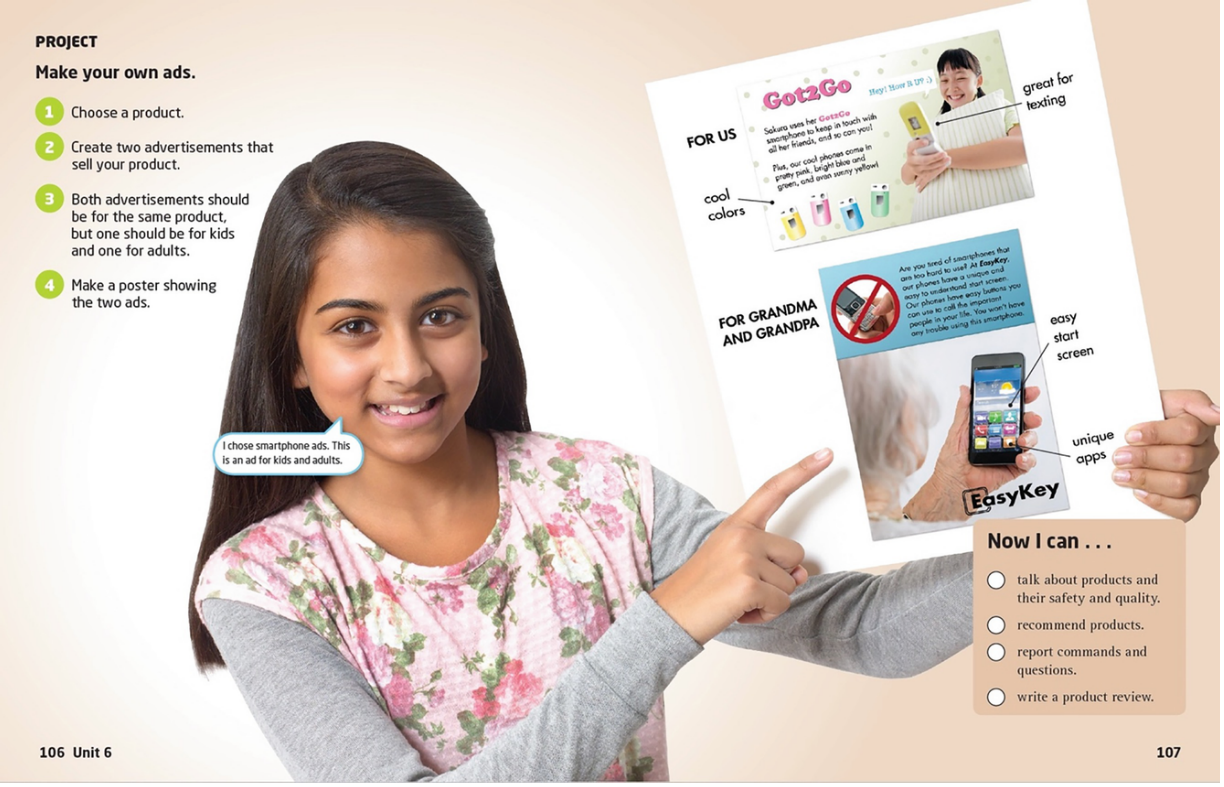
After practising this language to describe an advertisement, learners will be better prepared for a visual literacy inquiry about the same advertisement using questions from the Critical Visual Literacy Inquiry for Advertisements.

Taking a critical literacy stance on advertisements geared towards children, it is noticeable how boys and girls and the products being advertised are represented in the media. For example, for toy marketing the colour of clothing, toys, and packaging tend to be blue for boys and pink for girls, or even showing images of boys with cars and action figures and girls with dolls and beauty kits (Auster & Mansbach, 2012; Fine & Rush, 2018). Although some primary learners in some teaching contexts may not be ready for a deep, critical discussion of gender stereotyping and binaries, this chapter posits that it is part of a primary English language teacher's wider educator remit to analyse images in advertisements and equip children with visual inquiry strategies to examine such images. Children are constructing their identities based on these images they see around them, and it is therefore important that primary English language teachers build their critical visual literacy and use inquiry to discuss how images convey meaning in multimodal communication. Furthermore, if primary educators show children the world through images while teaching English as a global language, it is therefore crucial to focus on developing critical visual literacy in the classroom.

Pedagogical Principle #3: Empower Primary English Learners in the Production and Interpretation of Real-World Visual Image and Multimodal Ensembles

Encourage Primary English Learners to Create Real-World Multimodal Ensembles Once primary English learners have explored a type of visual image and multimodal ensemble, they will then be in a stronger position to begin to learn how to produce or create their own. A visually literate person should not only be able to read or interpret visual language but also write visual messages, which includes selecting as well as creating images (Bamford, 2003) and primary learners in the digital age are not only consumers of information, but they are also producers of information. Following critical analysis of visual communication, the next stage is to be therefore able to create or produce visual communication by enabling children to use what they have learned.

For example, after learning about advertising techniques, upper-primary English learners could create their own advertisements. In the project shown in Fig. 6.10, two advertisements are created in order to promote a product. Both advertisements should be for the same product, but one should be for children and the other for adults, which encourages learners to consider these different audiences and what might attract them to a product. In the model provided, the girl chooses to create two advertisements for a mobile phone: one for children her age and one for grandparents. Thus, creating two advertisements for different audiences will help children be more aware of how advertisers are trying to sell products to them.



PROJECT

Make your own ads.

1. Choose a product.
2. Create two advertisements that sell your product.
3. Both advertisements should be for the same product, but one should be for kids and one for adults.
4. Make a poster showing the two ads.

I chose smartphone ads. This is an ad for kids and adults.

Got2Go

Hey! How R U? :)

Sakura uses her Got2Go smartphone to keep in touch with all her friends, and so can you!

Plus, our cool phones come in pretty pink, bright blue and green, and even sunny yellow!

Are you tired of smartphones that are too hard to use? At *EasyKey*, our phones have a unique and easy to understand start screen. Our phones have easy buttons you can use to call the important people in your life. You won't have any trouble using this smartphone.

EasyKey

Now I can . . .

- ○ talk about products and their safety and quality.
- ○ recommend products.
- ○ report commands and questions.
- ○ write a product review.

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Fig. 6.10 A project on advertisement creation for different audiences. (Excerpt from *Our World 6 Student's Book, Second Edition*, pp. 106–107 (National Geographic Learning, 2020))

Sensitize Children to the Relationship Between Text and Image During this process of enabling children to create visual texts, it is crucial they understand that multimodal and multimedia communications are not solely words plus images. Rather, word meanings are modified in the context of image-meanings, and vice versa, opening up a wider range of potential meanings (Lemke, 1998; Serafini, 2014). Teachers can encourage primary English learners to create multimodal ensembles that they have analysed together and if children have analysed and engaged in visual literacy inquiries with memes, infographics, informational text, and advertisements, then they can begin to practise creating them.

For example, when creating an advertisement, learners should focus on making a multimodal ensemble, rather than just writing words and adding images. This requires consideration of the layout, formatting, choice of photographs or illustrations, colour and size of text, amount of text used, and the placement of text and images. Language is multimodal; therefore, it is necessary to teach primary English learners the process is not: draft text first without considering images and other features. Children consider how to use an image to convey specific messages about their product in an advertisement by considering ‘What do I *not* need to write because the image will communicate this?’ English language teachers are frequently focused on ensuring their learners’ written English is complete and detailed; however, by understanding that communication is multimodal, teachers should additionally ensure that their learners discuss ‘What do I *not* need to write?’ For example, some advertisements never mention what the product is or why someone should purchase it, but rather show a famous basketball player making a slam dunk and the text says ‘Just do it.’ This follows the advertising technique known as testimonials, shown in Fig. 6.8, and engaging children in creating advertisements and other multimodal forms of communication can deepen their ability to understand the use of authentic images in the world around them.

In the digital landscape, children need to also learn to read and write electronic texts and teachers should therefore teach them how to use free software (e.g., Canva, Piktochart, GIF Maker) to create memes, infographics, or GIFs, and to safely access video apps like YouTube and TikTok. However, even if learners do not have easy access to computers, tablets, or the Internet, teachers can still encourage them to take their own photographs and videos, draw their own illustrations and infographics, and create using the resources available to them at home and at school. The process of understanding how use of images in multimodal communication can be facilitated in a plethora of ways which are both contextually congruent and age-relevant.

4 Conclusion

Developing primary English learners’ visual literacy extends beyond using images to make English lexis comprehensible. Although visuals are important for scaffolding language learning, this chapter urges primary educators to integrate real-world images and multimodal ensembles as core elements of their English language and literacy instruction. Approaching each image with visual literacy inquiry routines encourages children to analyse images with an increasingly critical lens in order to better understand, interpret and evaluate them. Furthermore, primary English learners should also learn to create their own multimodal texts that mirror real-world communication. Primary English language teachers should expose their learners to many types of real-world images and then focus on teaching them *how* to interpret them as an integral part of multimodal communication. As this chapter has demonstrated, visual literacy must be learned and an integral part of formal literacy instruction, especially as every image is embedded in sociocultural practices that hold meaning and affect how children construct their understanding of the world and themselves. Primary educators thus have a responsibility to help children understand the visual messages that lie just underneath the surface of every image.

Finally, children in the primary years require multiple opportunities to engage actively with visual images and create multimodal messages that can communicate their own ideas and express their own identities. This is crucial because communication in the world is multimodal and image cannot be separated from text and when preparing learners to use English as a global language, primary teachers should integrate real-world, authentic multimodal ensembles and develop children's visual literacy as a necessary part of communication in English.

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7. Fostering Digital Literacies in Primary English Language Education

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Keywords Digital literacy – Digital literacy frameworks – English language education – Primary education – Practical classroom applications

1 Introduction

While literacy has been primarily defined as an inherently cognitive activity and a person’s ability to read for understanding and write to be understood, recently, focus has been placed on its multivalent and multifaceted nature with the addition of a new set of global skills (Engen et al., 2015; International Literacy Association, 2020). The current definition adopted by UNESCO encompasses the new literacies that have emerged in recent decades that involve reading, writing, and learning through the web, and information and communication technologies. As a result, UNESCO’s (2004) definition of literacy is condensed as ‘the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts’ (p. 13). This expansion of the traditional definition of literacy is evidenced in the revised versions of national curricula across the globe (e.g., Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2018; Norwegian Directorate for Education & Training, 2020; United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education, 2018). The rapid growth and ubiquity of technology has necessitated the need to embed in national curricula digital literacy skills from children's initial years of schooling. For instance, the United Arab Emirates English language curriculum (2018) for primary school underlines the importance of using digital tools to meet some of the learning objectives but also of introducing children to digital texts. In the Netherlands, one of the missions of the Ministry of Education (2018) is to strengthen the link between education and the job market. As a result, emphasis on digital literacies is placed in the national curriculum across the different subjects in primary education, including English.

The need for national curricula to promote educational uses of technology has been further cemented by children's immersion in experiences with digital tools before their formal schooling years (Burnett, 2016; International Literacy Association, 2020). As research has illustrated, children are introduced to a variety of digital tools and software (e.g., tablets, smart phones, game consoles, and laptops) and they are able to operate them confidently from a very young age (Burnett, 2016; Sefton-Green et al., 2016). Initially, cultivating children's digital literacy skills was interpreted by teachers as the ability to operate different technologies (Bloch, 2021; Sefton-Green et al., 2016). In today's educational sphere, however, being digitally literate encompasses an assortment of complex higher-order processing skills (cognitive, sociological, motoric, and emotional) that move beyond the technical ability to employ software, an application or a tool.

Due to the diverse needs and expectations that different societies set, the definitions of digital literacy vary as they tend to be context-specific (Burnett, 2016). Dudeney et al. (2016) define digital literacy in the context of English language teaching as the 'ability to effectively make use of the technologies … safely, wisely and productively. This includes not just *technical* skills, but perhaps more importantly, an awareness of the social practices that surround the appropriate use of new technologies' (p. 115). For primary education, digital skills should create a new landscape of knowledge by strengthening children's lives in the present and in the future both in their day-to-day schooling but also experientially during their lives outside of the classroom. The objective should rely on enhancing children's social, physical, and emotional well-being to be able to participate fully in society and acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to live in the twenty-first century.

Becoming digitally literate encompasses not only the practical knowledge from accessing the Internet to operating a range of tools but also e-learning skills, technological knowledge and understanding required for children to think critically, develop creativity, express their multiple identities, and engage/interact with a global community when creating digital content. Learners should also be made aware of the potential risks and dangers associated with online activity and ways in which they can tackle these. In other words, digital literacy encapsulates the indispensable e-knowledge, skills, and understanding that enable children to participate meaningfully and safely in social, cultural, economic, civic, and interpersonal digital life in the here and now but also in the future. Following a review of the literature on digital literacies with primary-aged learners of English, this chapter aims to present an updated version of an existing framework with practical examples that primary English educators could apply to their practices and, thereby enhance children's digital literacy skills.

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2 Current Issues and Research

Digital Literacy and Primary Education Curricula

The International Literacy Association (ILA, 2020) ranks digital literacy as the most prescient topic to be addressed in literacy education with digital competence being described as an important prerequisite for twenty-first-century education and second/foreign language teaching in primary schools. As indicated earlier, because of this, teaching and learning in the twenty-first century have been reenvisaged with curricula placing more emphasis on children becoming digitally literate in English language learning settings (Bloch, 2021; Burnett, 2016; International Literacy Association, 2020; Tompkins, 2018).

Recent reports encourage the adoption of digital literacy across all subject areas to foster the global skills necessary to fully participate in the digital world (International Literacy Association, 2020). In primary education, more than half of the European education systems accommodate digital competences as a cross-curricular theme. It is addressed as a compulsory separate subject in eleven countries and included in other compulsory subjects in ten countries. The Nordic countries are often perceived as an example as to how national curricula could integrate digital literacy into teaching. For instance, in Norwegian primary education, digital literacy has been identified as a key competence since the 2006 curriculum reform, when it was upgraded and defined as a basic skill across all subjects and grades and was further reinforced in the revised version of the curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education & Training, 2020). Similarly, the Swedish primary school curriculum highlights the importance of teachers in different subjects providing children with opportunities to develop a critical and responsible approach to digital technology, to be able to identify opportunities and risks, as well as to be able to evaluate information (Ministry of Education & Research, 2018). As it transpires, digital literacy education should enhance the learning experience beyond the operational and the presentational in ways that are appropriate to children's ages and learning contexts. For primary school children, therefore, the goal is to foster digital competency, which also prompts understanding of intercultural issues, the development of social awareness, learning beyond the classroom, fostering of critical thinking, effective communication, and expressive creativity.

While English language classrooms should aim to create new opportunities for learning and teaching with digital technologies in the here and now, they should also adequately prepare children as fully functioning citizens with knowledge, skills, and understanding that contribute to their lives beyond the classroom (International Literacy Association, 2020; Turan & Akdag-Cimen, 2020). As Dudeney et al. (2016) postulate, this endeavour should also be the main objective of English language teachers in primary education. For instance, communicative language teaching presupposes active communication and interaction with oral skills being perceived as an important skill that learners need to develop. In today's world, most of these interactions are digitally mediated, which necessitates a key role of cultivating digital literacy in English language classrooms (Dudeney et al., 2016). Furthermore, teaching and learning should correspond with what children do and experience outside the classroom as in some cases what is being taught has little relevance to their lives and, as a result, cannot prepare them as fully functional citizens of today and in the future (Burnett, 2016; Turan & Akdag-Cimen, 2020).

Fostering Digital Literacy in ELT

While national curricula are making good progress in integrating digital skills from the early years onwards, the belief that technology could potentially have a detrimental effect on children’s social, emotional, and cognitive development still permeates in society (Dudeney et al., 2016; Palmer, 2015). Recent research has challenged these assumptions and heightened the role technology can play in developing primary children’s English language learning with the ensuing advantages outweighing the drawbacks (Durriyah & Zuhdi, 2018; Hussain, 2018; Mudra, 2020; Neokleous, 2019). As these studies reveal, the use of technology and digital tools in the English language classroom could contribute towards: (a) fostering autonomous learning (Hussain, 2018; Neokleous, 2019); (b) enhancing vocabulary, reading, and writing skills (Mudra, 2020); (c) sustaining motivation (Neokleous, 2019); (d) providing access to authentic materials (e.g., YouTube videos, podcasts, websites) (Neokleous, 2019); and (e) ensuring authentic interaction opportunities outside the classroom, thus developing a dynamic community of learners (Durriyah & Zuhdi, 2018; Hussain, 2018).

As the skills, knowledge, and understanding required to effectively participate in today’s and tomorrow’s digital environments have become indispensable from a young age, Burnett (2016) argues that fostering children’s digital literacy should include activities (e.g., creating, collaborating, communicating) that would contribute towards increased confidence in their daily lives. To achieve this in practice, enhancing digital literacy means providing learners the opportunity to employ digital technologies when it is relevant and helpful while developing, at the same time, active, creative, and critical uses of them. For instance, research has demonstrated that the use of social networking platforms (e.g., Kik Messenger, Discord, Houseparty) and blogging assisted in this goal with children not only engaging creatively with technology but also making informed choices and thinking critically about the opportunities offered by digital resources (Burnett, 2016; Mudra, 2020). From an English language perspective, their integration has shown to ameliorate children’s performance in written tasks and create communicative opportunities in the target language beyond the classroom, which for many learners at the primary level constitutes their sole exposure to the language (Turan & Akdag-Cimen, 2020).

With the aim of exemplifying the interest generated by activities that encouraged critical thinking, the children in Vikneswaran and Krish's (2015) study reported feeling more comfortable participating during discussions because the informality made them active and also that they were not being judged when sharing ideas. Al-Qallaf and Al-Mutairi's study (2016) with fifth graders in Kuwait, with a focus on digital literacy embedded in their English language learning, demonstrated that while children were at first reluctant to participate in blogging activities, along with enhancing their functional skills, their posts not only incrementally increased but their sentences in English became more complex, accurate, and more creative.

Similarly, Mudra's (2020) study revealed that the inclusion of technology for online reading tasks stimulated children's motivation while also prompting them to look up unknown lexical items. In addition, Pratolo and Solikhati's (2020) study indicates that embedding activities that foster digital literacy in English language classrooms assists sustaining motivation among children as it helps to provide an engaging and creative context. Furthermore, video-gaming has also increasingly become a learning tool that offers teachers the ability to further promote children's digital literacy and sustain their motivation. For instance, Minecraft is used in English language classes to introduce new vocabulary related to describing a town (e.g., stream, hill, bridge) or to practise children's speaking skills by asking them to record a story about the city they created (Dudeney et al., 2016).

While national curricula have foregrounded the skills, knowledge, and practices that can be enhanced through digital literacy in primary education for the reasons indicated above, researchers argue as to the opportunities digital literacy practices can offer in supporting multicultural learners—who have the ability to function efficiently in more than one cultural and linguistic background—to affirm their identities and in promoting an informed use of technology (Bloch, 2021; Murtafi'ah & Putro, 2019). Supporting multicultural learners to affirm their identities and promoting an informed use of technology are two skills that have been identified as quintessential of twenty-first-century learners and which digital literacy can succeed in developing among children from an early age (Bloch, 2021; International Literacy Association, 2020). An understanding of digital literacy encompasses a broad sense of practices that could assist in children understanding but also participating in any culture. For instance, a digitally enhanced lesson could foster multicultural awareness by introducing children to intercultural and social contexts and the means to enhance and support them. Such possibilities promote social equity and justice and allow for intercultural commentary and community cohesion (Bloch, 2021). Furthermore, digital literacy in the twenty-first century should strengthen a critical approach that would culminate in informed use of technology (Murtafi'ah & Putro, 2019). A digitally literate child is one who is not only able to use different technologies, but also able to think critically and make informed decisions about the content they encounter on the Internet, over what information to retain and what to discard, and which digital resource to use to convey one's message more effectively (Bland, 2021). In addition, for children to become discerning digital participants in today's and tomorrow's society, they should be able to mitigate safety issues that revolve around cyberbullying, privacy, and social media behaviours. The purpose of digital literacy education should not solely rely on how to be online but also how to be cognizant about to be safe while online (Murtafi'ah & Putro, 2019). Undisputedly, the teacher's role is pivotal in building a classroom environment that would maximize the opportunities afforded by technology to improve children's English language skills and also to foster the competencies needed for today's glocal citizens.

The Role of Teachers in Fostering Digital Literacy

Literature has highlighted the influence teachers can exert on primary children's attitudes towards digital literacy (Eryansyah et al., 2019). It is precisely for this reason that teachers should be adequately trained to facilitate learners' digital understanding and knowledge. While some primary English language teachers are open to new ways of teaching that make use of technology, others may be more reluctant (Palacios Hidalgo et al., 2020; Son et al., 2017). In certain contexts, research has also highlighted the different expectations of children from their teachers as to how digital competence could be interpreted (Engen et al., 2015). Consequently, the introduction of digital literacy in school curricula at all levels has created a demand for large-scale in-service professional development. Palacios Hidalgo et al. (2020) conclude that in most cases, English language teachers are not adequately prepared to integrate technology into their teaching after they graduate. A survey conducted by Cote and Milliner (2018) to explore the digital literacies of in-service

English language teachers revealed that the focus of the lessons revolved around enhancing children's functional technology skills. As a result, the teacher's limited understanding of what digital literacy education encompasses along with their ability to work with technology has resulted in digital tools being used for enjoyment rather than for educational purposes. The participants ascribed their hesitancy to embed digital literacy that would enable them to respond constructively to learners' needs to a lack of training. For this reason, they recognized the importance of upgrading their digital skills through seminars and workshops. Son et al.'s study (2017) among pre-service English language teachers revealed that introducing an educational technology module during their training could result in them adopting more positive attitudes towards technology with increased chance of integrating digitally enhanced instruction during their teaching careers. It would additionally support their growth and development as confident implementors of innovative and creative educational approaches.

Implementing Digital Literacies in Primary ELT

The importance of primary English language teachers possessing the required knowledge that would enable children to make fruitful use of their digital skills, knowledge, strategies, and understanding that would prepare them to develop necessary competences is further strengthened by Eryansyah et al.'s (2019) study. The findings revealed that primary children were not as digitally literate as their teachers believed. Therefore, teachers need to be able to provide the required training that would enable children to develop further their digital literacy skills and extend beyond those acquired through observing and mirroring. In this way, they would be better equipped for the here and now but also the future from their lower-primary years onwards.

Because of the abundance and proliferation of terms available to define digital literacy, recent studies argue in favour of more substantial and practical guidance from researchers (Neokleous, 2019; Tompkins, 2018). Researchers highlight the need to develop practical teaching materials that would build greater digital competence and also help teachers overcome the challenge of being confident enough to teach digital skills (Eryansyah et al., 2019; Neokleous, 2019). Furthermore, while digital literacy can play a catalytic role in the development of multiple literacies, there is a need for a framework of reference that would help children, teachers, and also parents/caregivers identify the competences that are cultivated, the progress of their digital enculturation, and most importantly, understand the often-abstract nature of digital skills (Palacios Hidalgo et al., 2020). Based on the issues and research in this chapter, the following section provides an updated version of a pedagogical framework for developing digital knowledge and skills with examples of activities that could be used in upper-primary English classrooms. The collective objective is to enable learners to access the full potential of the Internet in order to critically evaluate information, as well as to create and communicate digital content.

3 Practical Applications

To foster children's digital literacy and in an attempt to provide clearer guidelines for primary English language teachers who are either reluctant or do not feel confident enough to introduce learning activities that adopt digital tools in their classrooms, a number of pedagogical frameworks have been developed. While most of the frameworks that exist cover a wide range of grades, few have been developed with primary-aged learners in mind in order to enhance children's digital competence. For the practical applications section of this chapter, Belshaw's (2014) *Eight C's Framework* is adopted as its implementation can assist in addressing the needs that need to be taken into account when developing digital literacy as discussed in the previous section. Most significantly, the model focuses on primary children learning English as another language.

The Eight C's Framework

The implementation of activities which aim to foster digital literacy should be based on a framework that provides teachers with a solid rationale and clear pedagogical objectives. Belshaw (2014) introduced eight elements that need to be taken into account when working to develop digital literacy (see Fig. 7.1).

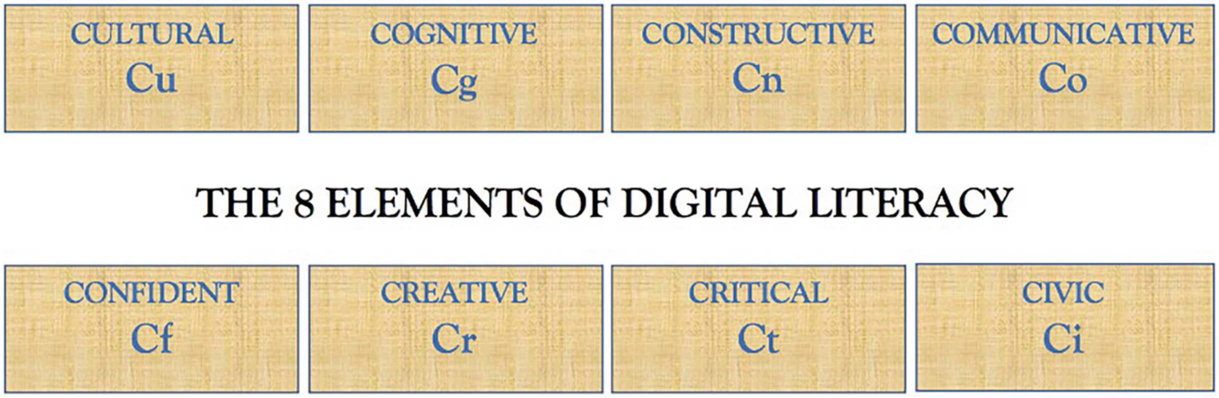

Fig. 7.1 The eight elements of digital literacy. (Adapted from Belshaw, 2014)

The cultural element revolves around understanding of the Internet culture and how to navigate and adjust to different digital environments while it also covers topics such as online safety and privacy. The cognitive element encompasses the technical abilities and skills required to operate digital tools and devices. The constructive element is the ability to build on and use digital content that has already been produced. The communicative element centres on the interaction between users in digital environments. The confident element stresses the need for the digital user to be able to feel assured and develop a sense of belonging. The creative element of the framework refers to the original work that users make with digital tools. The critical element encircles the ability to evaluate digital tools, applications, and content. It also involves the reflections of a digital user's actions and practices and the impact these might have on other users. The civic element revolves around the preparation of users to participate in tomorrow's society.

The Nine C's Framework

However, Belshaw's (2014) model does not capture the latest issues as identified in the previous section and which English language teachers should take into consideration when promoting digital literacy. For this reason, the *Eight C's Framework* partially meets the needs of primary classrooms and a ninth element should now be added. This chapter therefore proposes an updated version of Belshaw's (2014) framework that could be used in primary classrooms for children aged between ten and twelve years. Cross-hatching would constitute the ninth element, which would bring the framework up to date with current needs aligned with the realities outside the classroom to provide engaging and meaningful digital learning experiences as shown in Fig. 7.2.

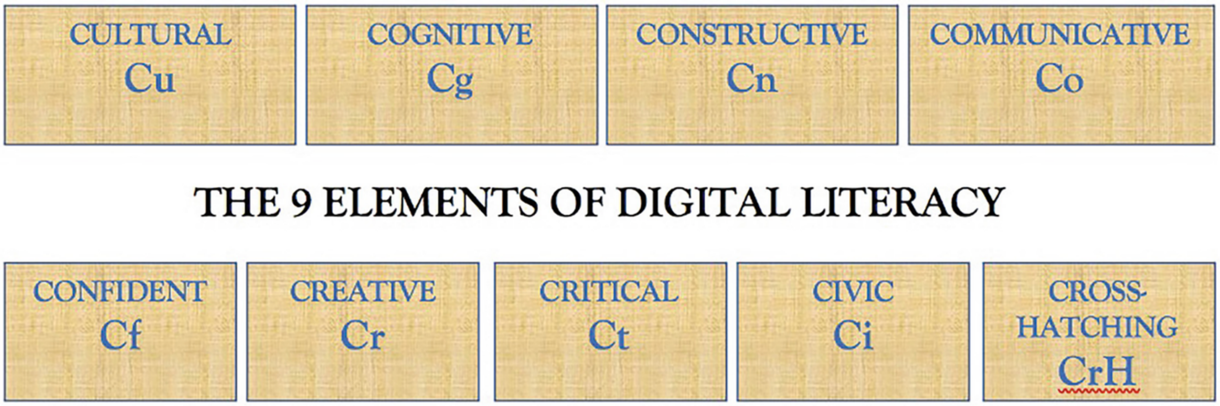

Fig. 7.2 The nine elements of digital literacy. (Adapted from Belshaw, 2014)

Cross-hatching (CrH) can manifest in three different forms, but just like in art, each form represents an intersecting set of parallel lines. Firstly, the cross-hatching element describes the intersection of interaction and expression through a combination of different modes that could include gestural, spatial, spoken language, and audio dimensions. Secondly, cross-hatching encompasses the ability to digitally blend and provide connections within and beyond the immediate learning environment. Learning also occurs beyond the limited constraints of a traditional classroom and children should be able to find avenues to apply what they have learned outside the classroom. Technology is able to provide pathways to connections between the classroom and the real world. The practice of v/blogging constitutes a typical example of how connections can be initiated within the classroom setting and move beyond. Finally, the third form of cross-hatching promotes a blend of different cultures and traditions that can emerge from learners' digital work and creations. Digital collaboration between children and also with members of the community can challenge cultural stereotypes and turn cultural differences into intercultural understandings. Accepting cultural differences and applying them to their local context further contributes to the sense of glocalization that digital literacy can foster (Bloch, 2021; Tompkins, 2018).

The Nine C's Framework can be used by primary English language teachers for designing pedagogical activities that would enhance children's digital literacy skills and enable them to connect with and contribute to their world. When fostering digital literacy some of the nine elements could be more relevant than others, they would all be present to some extent as they are inextricably linked, and employing one will often involve children making use of others. The aims of *the Nine C's Framework* for primary children learning English are to:

- Shed light on the more nuanced aspects beyond only skills and competence development;
- Place emphasis not only on learning with technology but also on technology and the risks associated with its use;
- Promote autonomy with children taking increased control of their learning;
- Provide active interpersonal connections within and beyond the classroom;
- Harness digital creativity;
- Identify the child's ability to tackle and resolve issues that arise in digital environments;
- Ensure that children learn the digital skills they need to be active and engaged digital citizens;
- Foster a sense of glocal community;
- Enable the expression of personality, identity, and uniqueness;
- Enable primary English language teachers to respond constructively and positively to the challenges that recent scholarship on digital literacy highlights as lacking.

Putting theory into practice, the following section presents two teaching activities that can be used with primary school learners (10–12 years of age) in the English language classroom. The examples are anchored in *the Nine C's framework* and illustrate the needs discussed in the previous section, which digital literacy education and enculturation should heighten.

Practical Application 1: Spotting Fake News

As exemplified earlier, digital safety is a parameter primary English language teachers should take into consideration and cultivate from a young age when fostering digital literacy (Murtafi'ah & Putro, 2019). The activity that follows is an example of how this can be promoted with children learning English aged between ten and twelve years.

Learners are presented with a set of news reports and/or headlines that do not portray real news along with a set of news reports and/or headlines that offer an accurate portrayal of events based on facts without false information, bias, or any misinformation. Teachers can use headlines/reports from current affairs websites for children (e.g., Dogo News) or create their own. In groups, children work together to investigate the information and decide whether their sets describe fake or real news. Children have to agree on the features that make the headlines either false or real and update the report presenting the real information in a digital format. Some of these traits could include: the author (is there one?, do they know the author?, does the author have a track record?), the website (have they visited the website before?, is it an official website?), the headline (does it contain any spelling mistakes/typos?), pictures (are there any pictures posted alongside the headline, are the pictures relevant?), but also whether it is being reported by other sources. The different groups present their decisions and together they discuss their reports. The teacher monitors the activity and provides language support as needed.

Based on *the Nine C's Framework*, the activity assists in the process of maintaining safe and responsible use of the Internet (Cu). Children use their technical skills to operate different tools (Cg) in their attempt to unravel what is real and what is not and build on the digital content that has been produced (Cn) by updating it with the real information. Most importantly, the activity strives to position children as critical consumers of information who are able to evaluate the credibility of the sources they read and share online (Ct). In this way, it prepares them for tomorrow's society (Ci) while it also provides a link within and beyond the classroom as they would often have to make the distinction between real and fake information in the real world (CrH). Being able to unearth the truth behind a fake report would bolster their confidence to navigate digital environments (Cf). Children can use the various digital environments designed for them (e.g., PopJam, Kidzworld, GoBubble) to interact (Co) in a follow-up activity that would result in a new digital artefact (Cr). For instance, children could prepare and record a talk show/podcast where they present and discuss the impact fake news can have, analyse some of the fake news they encountered online, and present their own tips and strategies of how to distinguish between real and fake news. In this way, the link within and beyond the classroom is strengthened (CrH).

Practical Application 2: Affirming Cultural Identities

As highlighted previously, recent research argues for the value of technology-enhanced instruction in the increasingly multilingual English language classrooms (Bloch, 2021). Digital technologies offer the possibility to create collaborative opportunities with community members that are either child- or teacher-led to provide a platform for a deeper understanding of diverse cultures and also the languages present in each classroom. The following includes examples of activities that can be used in a technology-enhanced upper-primary English language classroom and which along with fostering digital literacy can also promote an inclusive glocal environment (Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture, & Science, 2018; Norwegian Directorate for Education & Training, 2020; United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education, 2018).

Children could collaborate to create a fictional character using digital tools (e.g., Make Beliefs Comix, Strip Generator, ToonDoo) that would represent the cultural identities of each member of the group. Children can also collaborate with other classes in the different countries represented in the English language classroom, find guest speakers from these countries where issues that affect each society can be discussed and brought to light. Communication between the different classrooms can continue through social media sites for primary-age groups specifically where children can develop a hashtag where they can post, share, and interact. Alternatively, children can work together to create a digital poster using online tools (e.g., Glogster) with multimodal elements (photos/videos, music, and hyperlinks) and which will enable them to draw on their own experiences, share their own stories and multiple identities in the classroom.

Based on *the Nine C's Framework*, such activities contribute towards building online communities (Cu). With the possibility of geographically dispersed areas connecting synchronously or asynchronously through digital platforms (e.g., blogs, wikis, Teams, Zoom), communication within the classrooms expands from local to global (CrH). Such a possibility contributes further to the development of a glocal culture, which is one of the current missions of primary education (Bloch, 2021). Most importantly, children are introduced to topics that promote equality and social justice and which are quintessential for the development of tomorrow's citizens (Ci). The activity would also allow them to understand the digital culture as it is expressed and practised in different settings (Cu). Children can create (Cr) or build on already produced (Cn) artefacts using tools and devices which can further help refine their technical skills and knowledge (Cg). Being able to share digital artefacts that draw on their own personal experiences, memories, aesthetic preferences, expertise, and interests bolsters children’s confidence and sense of belonging (Cf). Using popular social media networking sites that children use in their everyday lives provides a further link between practices learned in school and practices used at home while also fostering a strong sense of identity (CrH).

4 Conclusion

Evidently, an increased number of studies report that digital tools and the use of technology has the potential to optimize the quality of English language teaching and learning (Hussain, 2018; Mudra, 2020; Neokleous, 2019). Digital tools and technology can pave the way for ensuring digital glocal citizens in sync with the current objectives of primary school education (Bloch, 2021; International Literacy Association, 2020; Tompkins, 2018). While being a citizen in the twenty-first century is often associated with the ability to use digital tools to access, create, integrate, and evaluate content, technology-enhanced English learning can also serve as a tool for empowerment and inclusion that further contributes to fostering a sense of identity and an understanding of interculturality. Furthermore, it can also foster a critical approach that would culminate in more informed use of technologies.

As limited attention has been directed towards primary school children, with most studies focusing on promoting digital literacy among teenagers in secondary education, it is also crucial to conduct further research with primary-aged learners that would shed light on the cognitive stages they undergo during their digital literacy training. Owing to the ever-evolving nature of technology, training with up-to-date information on current digital literacy issues needs to be crafted for in-service teachers to provide a smoother transition between new trends so that teachers are comfortable integrating software and learners are sufficiently equipped as tomorrow’s digital citizens. With the assistance of technology, primary English language classrooms need to not only reflect the needs and practices of the real world, but they should also pave the way for innovative, critically thoughtful, and socially purposeful endeavours that enhance children’s everyday lives.

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8. Reimagining Picturebook Pedagogy for Online Primary English Language Education

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1 Introduction

During the global pandemic, many authors/illustrators began recording video picturebook read-alouds and sharing these online to give children continued opportunities to engage with quality literature during school closures and to support their social and emotional well-being. While an online video picturebook read-aloud will never fully replace the excitement and intimacy of a face-to-face read-aloud event or the physical experience of holding a picturebook, they offer a powerful digital alternative to using physical books and a convenient way to reach broader and often hard to reach audiences. In addition, children today engage regularly in online video-based activities, so are becoming familiar with decoding multimodal texts from an early age. This context provided the incentive to reimagine picturebook pedagogy by creating a pedagogical framework for designing e-lessons around video picturebook read-alouds for online PELT.

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2 Current Issues and Research

The Picturebook and Multimodality

In order to recognize the relevance of the picturebook as a visual art form and a multimodal object, the following definition from children's literature scholarship is still widely cited and highly relevant today:

> A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design: an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historic document; and foremost, an experience for a child. As an art form, it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning page. (Bader, 1976, p. 1)

Bader's (1976) definition positions the picturebook as a multimodal text. An online video picturebook read-aloud affords further multimodal representation through an auditory, visual and language-rich event in which meaning is communicated through several modes.

Picturebooks and Video Read-Alouds: An Underutilized Resource

Picturebooks have been used in primary English language teaching as a motivating, flexible and authentic resource for over four decades as they can be interpreted on many levels and thus satisfy children of different ages and at different stages in their primary English language learning. However, despite the importance given to using children's literature in publications on PELT, picturebooks remain an underutilized resource (Garton et al., 2011). As a result, global as well as European uptake and embedding of the picturebook in PELT, is generally patchy with only small pockets of enthusiastic usage, usually advocated by passionate individuals. The main reason for this phenomenon is twofold: a lack of teacher education to raise awareness of the potential of picturebooks as a valid resource for PELT and how to exploit them for language and literacy learning as well as for wider educational goals and, factors such as, limited budgets for additional resources, the dominance of prescribed reading schemes in some countries and access to picturebooks in English. However, online video picturebook read-alouds, usually produced by publishing houses or literacy charities, despite being freely available via YouTube or social media platforms, are also rarely used in PELT. Yet, this ease of use facilitates global and equitable access to quality children’s literature by providing an ‘on-screen picturebook experience’ (Dunn, 2013, p. 235), and complies with IBBY’s (International Board on Books for Young People) aim to ‘Give children everywhere the opportunity to have access to books with high literary and artistic standards.’

Online Video Picturebook Read-Alouds and Engagement

In PELT, it is common practice for the teacher to share a picturebook with their class via a read-aloud to develop, in particular, children’s listening and comprehension skills. A read-aloud is a practice where teachers, parents, and caregivers read texts aloud to children. This promotes emerging literacy by developing phonological awareness, lexical and grammatical understanding, and supports listening and speaking skills, as well as enhances overall language confidence and a love of books. An online video picturebook read-aloud takes children beyond the development of the traditional four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing; it develops the ‘fifth skill of viewing’ (Donaghy, 2019) as well as visual literacy (Serafini & Moses, 2014) and creates two main types of engagement: affective and cognitive.

Affective Engagement

Listening to picturebook read-alouds in English lessons is a ‘shared social experience’ (Ellis & Brewster, 2014, p. 7) that provokes a shared response of laughter, sadness, excitement, and anticipation which contributes to children’s social, emotional, cognitive and intercultural development as well as their linguistic development. Moreover, understanding an online video picturebook read-aloud can be very motivating for children as they experience a strong sense of achievement. Since picturebooks address universal themes and celebrate diversity such as representation of characters with disabilities and non-stereotypical gender roles which rarely appear in commercially available English language learning materials, they provide opportunities for children to engage in tasks that are potentially much more relevant to their own and their classmates’ lived experiences.

Cognitive Engagement

Online video picturebook read-alouds provide meaningful and familiar contexts for English language learning in which they can become personally involved in a story as they connect to the characters and interpret the verbal and visual texts. Similar to face-to-face read-alouds, video read-alouds can be accompanied by a wide variety of multi-sensory activities which can stimulate children to think and reflect, give personal responses and reasons and develop critical thinking. Viewing also helps children ‘acquire information and appreciate ideas and experiences visually communicated by others’ (Donaghy, 2019). On subsequent viewings and in related follow-up activities, the children’s attention can be focused on specific information and images and the verbal text that has supported their deeper understanding.

Online video read-alouds also enable primary-aged language learners to exercise personal agency by self-pacing their learning. As they enjoy viewing video read-alouds over and over again, this frequent repetition allows language items to be more naturally acquired while others are being overtly reinforced through meaningful recycling. By using the pause and replay functions they can review pictures, words, and author’s facial expressions and gestures. These read-alouds empower because they allow repeated self-access to rich, authentic language and multimodal texts. It is the child who takes charge of these repeated viewings and develops autonomy so they ‘feel active and powerful in their role’ (Ellis, 2018, p. 86).

Researching and Analysing Video Picturebook Read-Alouds

Online video read-alouds by picturebook creators offer the novelty and excitement of ‘meeting’, listening to, watching, and creating an affective bond with a picturebook creator. However, they usually target children who are assumed to be proficient users of English as a first or additional language and are produced for their enjoyment and enrichment or for promotional purposes rather than for educational or English language learning purposes. The challenge for PELT teachers is therefore to select quality video read-alouds that are accessible, enjoyable and useful to children learning English as a foreign, second or additional language, and which ‘create an asynchronous learning experience while encouraging active engagement’ (Helbig & Piazza, 2020, p. 17).

In order to identify key criteria to apply when selecting video picturebook read-alouds for online learning in PELT, we conducted an observational analysis of read-alouds by authors and illustrators and identified the following five areas of importance as benchmarks for criteria setting.

(i) Suitability and Interest of the Picturebook

The suitability and interest of the picturebook in terms of content, linguistic, conceptual and cultural accessibility and appropriateness, aesthetic appeal and its educational affordances based on criteria from Ellis and Brewster (2014, p. 19) are essential for motivating children to view the read-aloud. Ultimately, success depends on having the 'right picturebook for the linguistic and cognitive ability and interests of the children in order to maximise their enjoyment, involvement and learning' (Ellis, 2018, p. 84). Picturebook choices should also be diverse in design and illustration and address diversity themes and promote positive values. As Malorie Blackman (2013), the 2013–2015 United Kingdom's Children's Laureate, maintains:

> All our children have the right to see themselves reflected in the stories available to them. Diversity is more than just seeing yourself reflected in the world of literature, it's about others being able to see you too. Every child should have a voice. No child should be invisible.

(ii) Video Production Approaches

Four main approaches to recording asynchronous video read-alouds were identified and we then analysed both the affordances and constraints of each for PELT.

Interactive Approach

This approach is similar to the Whole Book Approach (Lambert, 2020), which is an interactive, collaborative approach to reading aloud. The reader holds the picturebook open toward the screen or camera so the audience can see the words and pictures and experience the excitement and suspense of the 'drama of the turning page' (Bader, 1976, p. 1). A zoom function is achieved manually (i.e., bringing the picturebook closer to the camera or screen) to show close-ups and to highlight specific details to focus children's attention on the images. The reader makes direct eye contact with their virtual audience to establish their online presence.

Affordances

This approach encourages ‘children’s active participation in making meaning of all they see and hear…and invites children to react to the *whole* book – its art, design, production, paratextual and textual elements’ (Lambert, 2020, p. x). The audience sees the reader’s body position, gestures and movements, eyes, general facial expressions, and hears the variations in their voice, all of which are important in conveying meaning and supporting understanding during this multimodal event. The reader makes use of frequent ‘read-aloud talk’ (Ellis & Mourão, 2022), which is talk that goes beyond the reading of the picturebook’s verbal text. This exposes children to a wider range of spoken discourse—narrative and conversational—and develops listening and viewing skills as well as critical and creative thinking skills. It also replicates the ‘shared social experience’ (Ellis & Brewster, 2014, p. 7) of a physical, face-to-face read-aloud.

Constraints

It can be challenging to adapt this approach to the asynchronous read-aloud format as there is no real-time, face-to-face interaction and the reader cannot hear or see their audience in order to gauge their interest. This can make it difficult to maintain enthusiasm and find ways for viewers to engage and connect open-endedly.

Alternating Approach

This approach alternates between shots of the reader either holding the picturebook facing the viewers or facing themselves and shots of close-ups of selected pages in the picturebook.

Affordances

The camera can move around a page, zoom in and out and enable viewers to see and follow some of the words. Most readers use some ‘read-aloud talk’ (but less than in the *Interactive approach)* to engage children actively in the meaning-making process.

Constraints

Viewers see less of the picturebook, experience less of ‘the drama of the turning page’ (Bader, 1976, p. 1) and witness fewer facial clues and gestures to support understanding.

Performance Approach

The creator performs the book. For example, Michael Rosen chants the traditional action rhyme of *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* and performs the actions against a backdrop of the enlarged images. Karl Newson (author) and Ross Collins (illustrator) perform *I am a Tiger*, which is narrated entirely in dialogue so lends itself well to being acted out. Karl Newson plays the roles of the animals including the tiger and Ross Collins plays the role of the mouse against a backdrop of an enlarged image of a tiger. Close-ups of pages from the picturebook are also interspersed throughout the recording and Karl Newson wears a tiger costume when he performs the role of the tiger.

Affordances

The performance aspect of a read-aloud brings a story alive, helps children differentiate between characters and between narrative and dialogue and provides a springboard for a variety of drama-related activities. Children see some images and words, facial expressions and actions, and can repeat and act them out themselves.

Constraints

'Read-aloud talk' is used for openings and closures only so there is limited verbal interaction with the virtual audience.

Bird's Eye Approach

The reader often greets the viewers and introduces the book to create a connection with their virtual audience. The picturebook pages are then filmed from an overhead shot or bird's eye view camera angle (Fig. 8.1).

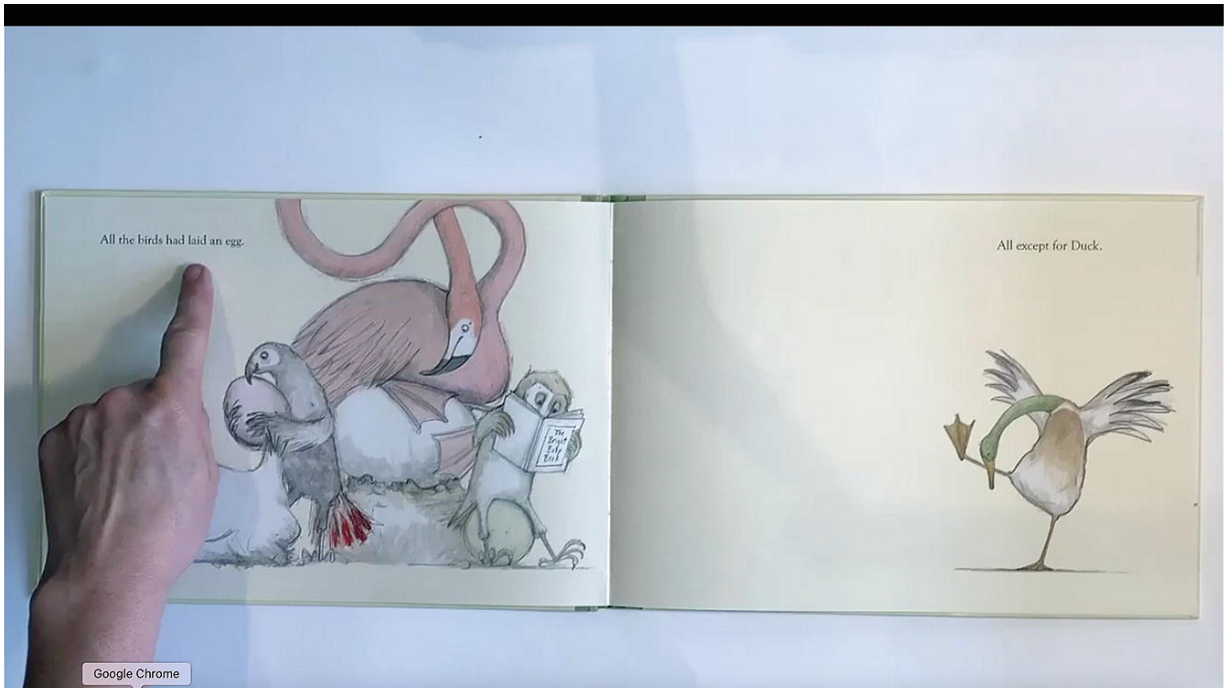


Fig. 8.1 Emily Gravett reading *The Odd Egg* from a bird's eye view camera angle and running her finger along the text

Affordances

The audience hears the words and sees the pictures and words clearly and the reader's hands as they turn the pages. The reader may use some 'read-aloud talk' and point to illustrations and run their finger along the text as they read so the audience can follow the words and connect written and spoken language which aids lexical development, clarity of pronunciation, and early literacy development.

Constraints

This approach dissociates the reader and their voice from the picturebook. As a result, primary English language learners are unable to make use of important clues to meaning via facial expressions, gestures, and movements to aid comprehension. There is also limited eye contact with the viewers during the read-aloud which reduces the reader's opportunity to establish their online presence and to connect with children digitally.

Additional Features

Regardless of the video production approach, some read-alouds include props and realia or subtitles and others include background music and animation. Some readers opt for reading positions such as crouching, kneeling or sitting cross-legged or outdoor settings in keeping with the theme of the story or are accompanied by a pet to create a more personal and informal persona. These features contribute to establishing an online rapport and to bringing words and images to life to further support understanding and engagement.

(iii) Techniques for Online Read-Alouds

These involve making effective use of the voice, eyes and body in order to contribute to the child's construction and interpretation of the picturebook story. Each creator has their own personal read-aloud style, but this analysis reveals that not all are skilled in bringing the story alive, being intelligible, clear, expressive and natural. Some may also speak in a falsely over-expressive manner or talk down to children and some find it difficult to maintain a suitable pace to maintain children's interest, motivation and perseverance to keep listening until the end. However, many readers are skilled and draw on vocal variety such as contrasting volume, pace, tone of voice, changing the voice for different characters, sounding expressive by varying intonation, using sound effects, lengthening vowel sounds for emphasis and pausing to convey mood and suspense, which all convey meaning and support children in their understanding. In addition, readers make frequent use of facial expressions, gestures and actions to show meaning and convey feelings and emotions (Figs. 8.2 and 8.3). They connect with their viewers by looking up from the page and looking directly at the screen or camera.

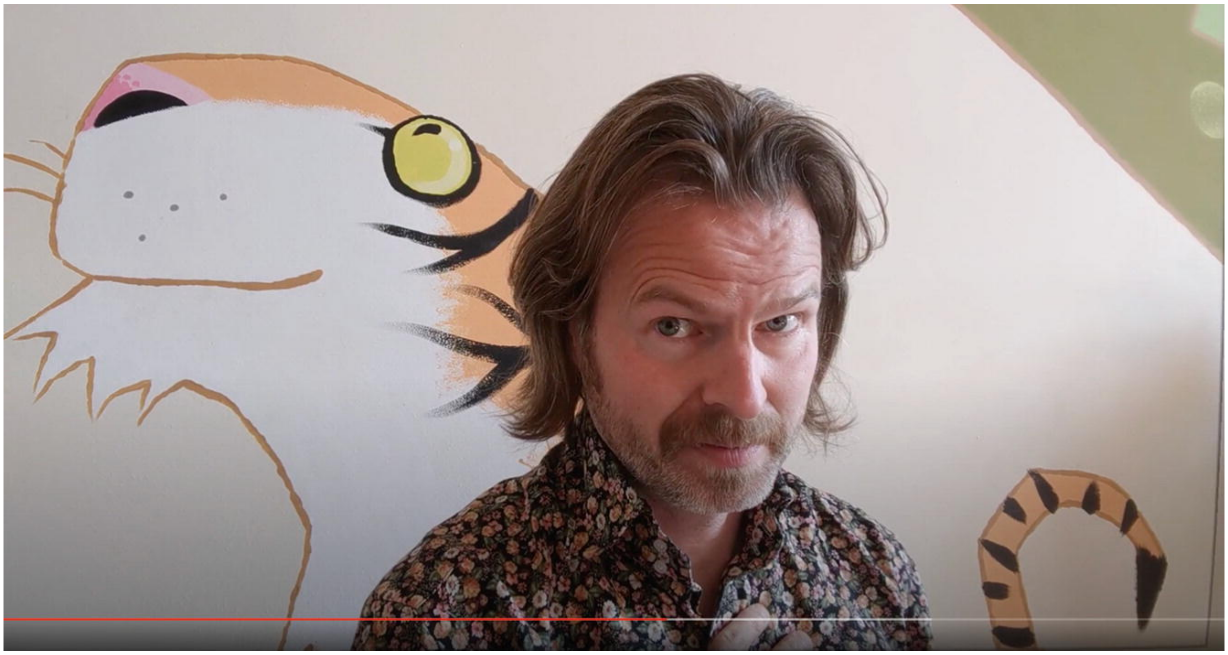


Fig. 8.2 Ross Collins reading *I am a Tiger* and narrowing his eyes, baring his teeth, making a ‘grrr’ sound and clawing his fingers as he reads ‘A tiger hunts for his lunch’

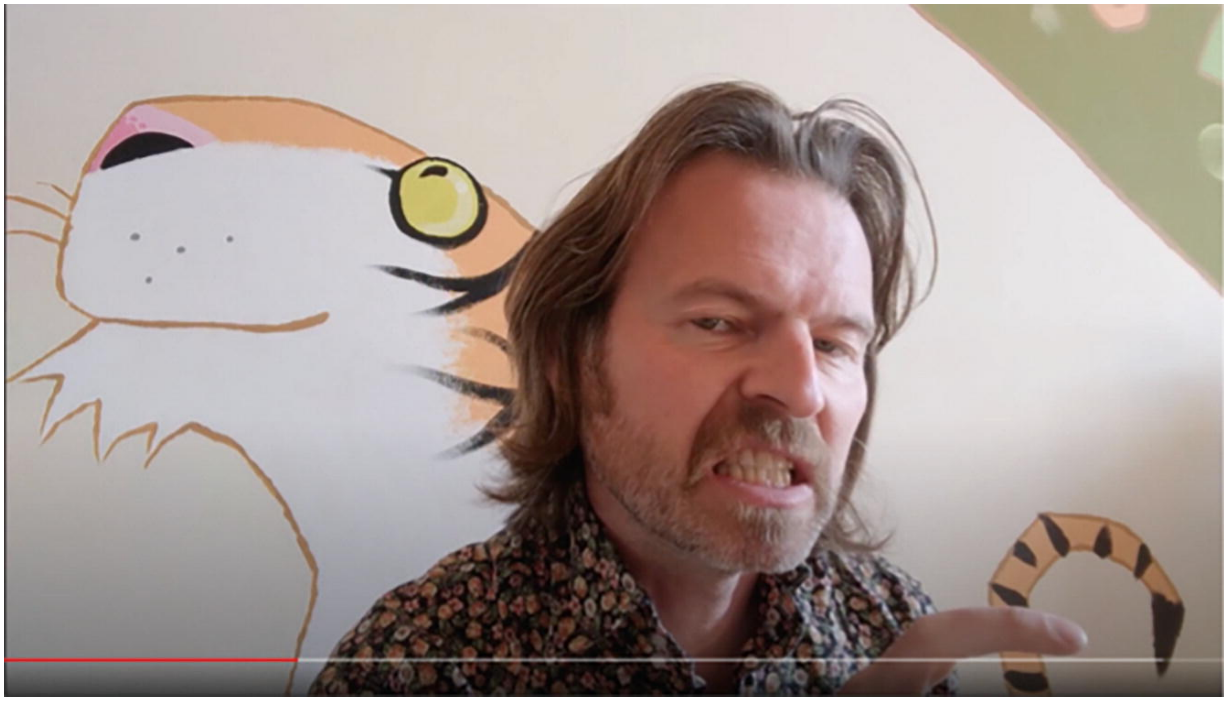


Fig. 8.3 Ross Collins reading *I am a Tiger*

(iv) Quality and Quantity of Read-Aloud Talk

As defined above, ‘read-aloud talk’ goes beyond the reading of the picturebook verbal text, that is, the narrative and enables the reader to mediate the read-aloud experience via ‘verbal scaffolding’ (Bland, 2019, p. 95). It shares many of the features of a dialogic approach (Alexander, 2020) to engage children’s interests and stimulate their thinking and its collaborative and supportive nature has social and emotional affordances. When readers use ‘read-aloud talk’, it establishes a personal approach and a social partnership. This is likely to be due to ‘conversational language’ (Mayer, 2019, p. 156) used in ‘read-aloud talk’ which is less formal and has been found to increase student engagement in online educational videos (Guo et al., 2014).

Several studies have categorized ‘read-aloud talk’ during face-to-face read-alouds. Beck and McKeown (2001) identify six components of reading aloud which they refer to as ‘Text Talk interactions’ (p. 4). These components include selection of text, initial questions, follow-up questions, pictures, background knowledge and vocabulary. Håland et al. (2021) use the term ‘stops for talking’ and distinguish between planned, spontaneous or no stops (p. 4). The analysis of video picturebook read-aloud talk is recent. Ellis and Mourão (2022) analysed transcriptions of a sample of read-alouds for both L1 and L2 speakers and also identified five categories of ‘read-aloud talk’. Although there are similarities with those of Beck and McKeown (2001), there are also differences. For example, the reader uses techniques to clarify such as repeating, expanding, explaining, etc. in addition to asking different types of questions to support English language development. The reader also brings children’s attention to the picturebook as ‘object’ to highlight peritextual features that may otherwise be omitted or passed by unnoticed (Figs. 8.5 and 8.6). At times, the reader uses metalanguage (Figs. 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6) to equip children to talk about specific features of the picturebook in English and ‘the aesthetic nature of a literary text’ (Bland, 2018, p. 5) to develop literary literacy as well as the valuable subskills of noticing and predicting. In asynchronous video picturebook read-alouds, ‘read-aloud talk’ ideally requires planning as it is not possible for the reader to be as spontaneous as in a live read-aloud where they can respond to the audience’s verbal and non-verbal engagement.

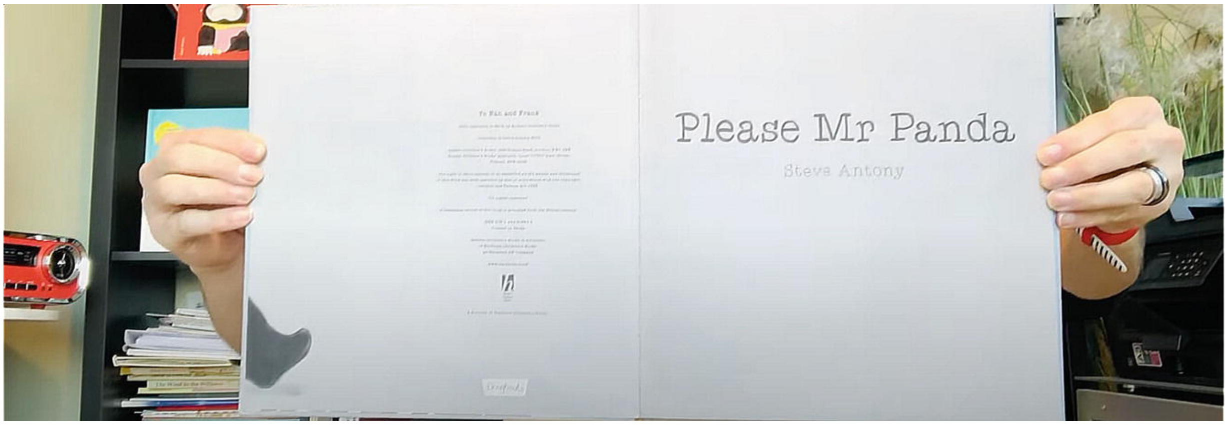
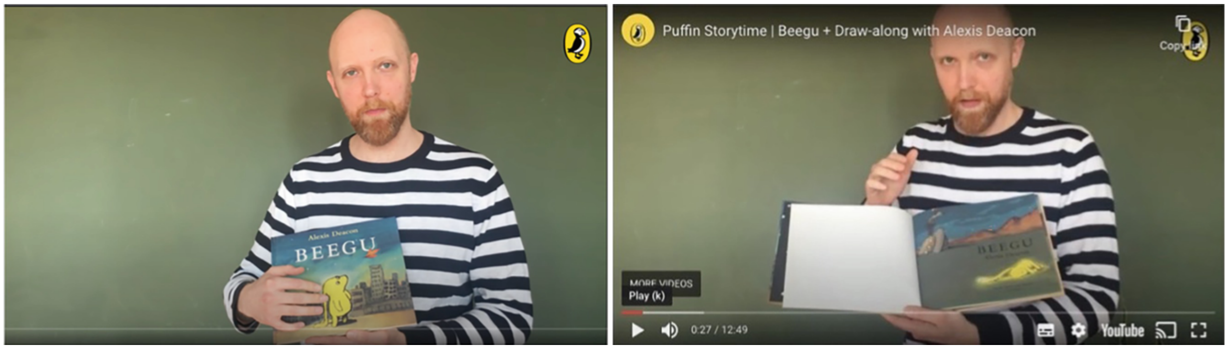

Please Mr Panda
Steve Antony

Fig. 8.4 Steve Antony modelling noticing in *Please, Mr Panda*. He shows the front matter and states, ‘And look! There’s Mr Panda walking into the page and there is his doughnuts hat!’


Alexis Deacon
BEEGU
Puffin Storytime | Beegu + Draw-along with Alexis Deacon
BEEGU
MORE VIDEOS
Play (k)
0:27 / 12:49
YouTube

Figs. 8.5 and 8.6 Alexis Deacon showing the cover and title page from *Beegu*

(v) Establishing Online Presence and Rapport

Making effective use of the voice, eyes and body and using ‘read-aloud talk’ are fundamental for creating a comfortable online persona, maintaining rapport with the viewers and recreating ‘a shared social experience’ (Ellis & Brewster, 2014, p. 7). It underpins the success of an effective asynchronous read-aloud event as it enables the reader to capture and sustain children’s interests by raising their curiosity and engaging them affectively. It enables the reader to build a relationship with and connect with their virtual audience, so they enjoy the read-aloud experience, and so learning is more likely to take place in the same way as in a face-to-face read-aloud in real time.

The analysis has enabled the development of a set of criteria for selecting asynchronous video picturebook read-alouds for PELT purposes. Teachers need to critically evaluate:

(i) the picturebook and its appeal for children and its potential for follow-up activities which enable children to make links with other areas of the curriculum, research and make personal choices according to their own interests and needs;

(ii) the affordances for e-learning offered by the video production approach used and how these meet children's needs and help achieve learning objectives;

(iii) the intelligibility, expressiveness, and naturalness of the read-aloud through the reader's effective use of voice, eyes and body to convey meaning and support understanding;

(iv) the quality and quantity of the 'read-aloud talk' the reader uses to encourage active participation in the meaning-making process;

(v) the online persona the reader creates to connect with their virtual audience and sustain and direct children's attention, instil motivation and perseverance, so that the child remains engaged throughout the read-aloud experience and wants to return to it a second or third time.

As can be seen, each video production approach has different affordances for primary English e-learning. Overall, the *Interactive Approach* offers the most effective support as it meets the range of criteria above.

The video read-alouds selected for the mini e-lesson series, include read-alouds from each approach to cater for the needs and individual preferences of diverse PELT audiences and their contexts. Read-alouds were also selected which provide children with the opportunity to listen to and watch creators of different genders, ages and ethnicities. Table 8.1 lists the picturebook e-lessons and the video production approaches. Some appear in more than one column as they share features from different approaches.

Table 8.1 Mini picturebook e-lessons—video production approaches

N°	Title	Interactive approach	Alternating approach	Performance approach	Bird's eye approach	Additional features
#1	*Amazing*	•				

N°	Title	Interactive approach	Alternating approach	Performance approach	Bird’s eye approach	Additional features
#2	*Wild*	•				
#3	*Grumpy Frog*		•			•
#4	*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*		•		•	
#5	*We’re Going on a Bear Hunt*			•		
#6	*I am Bat*		•	•		•
#7	*There’s a Monster in your Book*		•	•		•
#8	*Shark in the Park on a Windy Day!*	•	•	•		•
#9	*Please, Mr Panda*	•				
#10	*The Cave*		•			
#11	*The Odd Egg*				•	
#12	*The Bumblebear*		•			•
#13	*Hundred Feet Tall*	•				
#14	*Look Up!*	•	•			
#15	*Max the Brave*		•			
#16	*Beegu*	•	•	•		
#17	*The Queen’s Hat*	•				
#18	*Croc and Bird*	•				
#19	*I am a Tiger*			•		•
#20	*How to be a Lion*	•	•			
#21	*The Suitcase*	•				
#22	*You Matter*	•				
#23	*Rain Before Rainbows*			•		
#24	*Leaf*	•				

Note: https://pepelt21.com/mini-e-lessons/

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3 Practical Applications

Having developed criteria for selecting online video picturebook read-alouds, the following innovative pedagogical framework can be used for designing materials around picturebooks for e-learning in PELT. The framework targets children with English language teachers and/or parents/caregivers online or children working alone at home, or by teachers working with children in a face-to-face classroom context. The main aims are to:

- provide children with exposure to rich and comprehensible input through online video picturebook read-alouds that engage them affectively and cognitively;
- help children feel motivated and foster positive attitudes towards their English language learning;
- maintain and extend children's English language skills, especially their listening, viewing, comprehension and interpretive subskills;
- promote children's well-being during online learning;
- enable children to exercise their personal agency.

The principal goal for the teacher focuses on facilitation. Online teaching can be challenging and increase workload, so there is a need to consider the teacher's limited time. One of the greatest and most time-consuming challenges is selecting the most suitable read-aloud for a specific class. The pre-selected video picturebook read-alouds (Table 8.1) and accompanying e-lessons cater for engaging and meaningful learning experiences and generate a variety of tasks and activities to match the interests and abilities of primary learners. They also provide 'in practice' teacher education which can empower teachers to interpret and use them beyond following the e-lessons. This can therefore support and motivate early career primary English teachers to take their first steps in using children's literature and a picturebook-based methodology in PELT.

The Picturebook E-lesson Framework and Structure

The framework (Fig. 8.7) consists of five steps to sequence the activities in each e-lesson. It reflects the cyclical nature of learning and offers support to children as they develop their subskills and confidence when learning English online. It is also underpinned by three pedagogical models of teaching and learning:

- the Five Stage Model (Salmon, 2013), which provides a scaffold for a structured and paced programme of online learning;
- the three main stages of teaching a picturebook-based primary English language lesson, which includes pre-, while- and post- activities (Ellis & Brewster, 2014, p. 22);
- the Plan-Do-Do More-Review-Share learning cycle (Ellis & Ibrahim, 2015, p. 28).

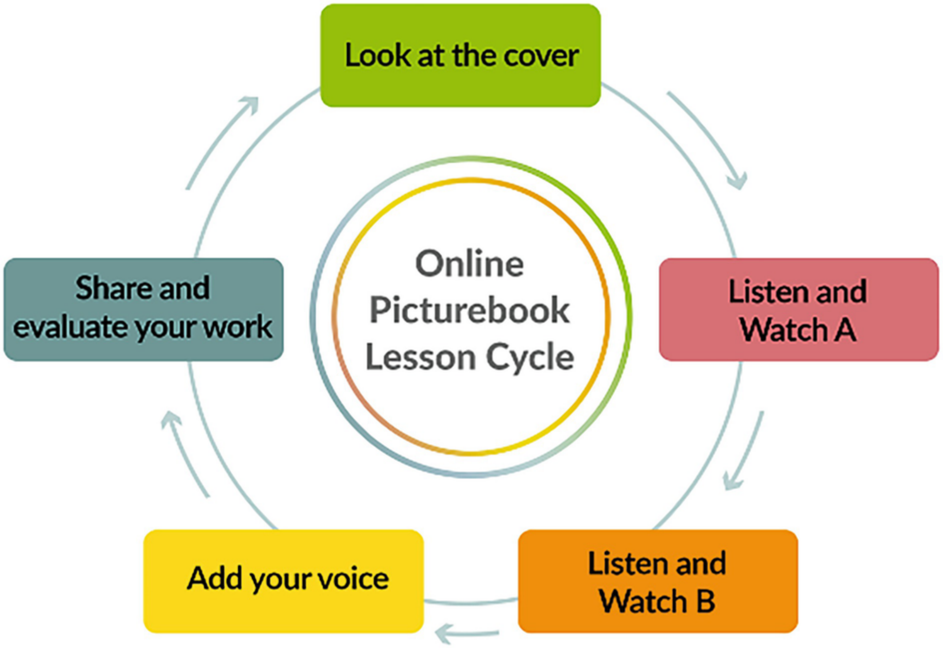

Fig. 8.7 Picturebook e-lesson framework

The cycle begins with children looking at the cover to predict, research and identify key words before completing two stages of listening and watching the video read-aloud for general understanding and to develop observation, listening and comprehension subskills. They then continue to add their voice to make personal, cross-curricular, and intercultural connections. The last step enables children to both share and evaluate their work.

Each individual e-lesson is additionally underpinned by criteria for pedagogical materials design based on Tomlinson's (2015) principles of exposure to language in use, affective engagement, cognitive engagement, meaning-related attention to form, and opportunities to use the language for communication. The lesson structure is:

- adaptable to the local PELT and e-learning context;
- accessible in terms of content (language learning tasks and activities) and the technological aspect;
- transparent with clear instructions and procedures for both the teacher or the participating child, parents and caregivers, based on the assumption that the lessons are to be mainly used asynchronously;
- adaptable to suit the needs of the teacher and class by offering a range of tasks and activities to select from according to the age, language level and interests of primary learners and time available.

The e-lesson structure offers continuity and familiarity through the use of age-appropriate and level-accessible action verbs (Fig. 8.8) which are used in Steps 1 and 4. They indicate what the children are required to do by making learning intentions and strategies explicit and visible (Ellis & Ibrahim, 2015; Hattie & Clarke, 2018), as adapted from Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The accompanying tasks and activities include a range of easily achievable as well as more challenging complex tasks to accommodate the different ages, developmental stages, and cognitive abilities of virtual audiences.

Remembering

- Colour
- Copy
- Count
- Describe
- Identify
- Join in
- List
- Notice
- Pronouce
- Read Along
- Read
- Notice
- Remember
- Repeat
- Sing Along
- Watch

Understanding

- Check
- Describe
- Identify
- Observe
- Predict
- Review
- Revise
- Translanguage
- Translate

Applying

- Act out
- Choose
- Discover
- Draw
- Make notes
- Move
- Personalise
- Plan
- Play
- Solve
- Write
- Give Opinions

Analysing

- Calculate
- Order

Evaluating

- Compare
- Imagine
- Revise
- Review
- Speculate
- Think

Creating

- Create
- Make notes
- Research
- Write

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Fig. 8.8 Mini e-lesson action verbs adapted from Bloom’s taxonomy

The Picturebook E-lesson Framework Steps

The following provides a deeper understanding of how the picturebook e-lesson framework works, by outlining each of the five steps.

Step 1 (Pre-viewing): Look at the Cover

In order to compensate for the minimal focus on peritextual features in many read-alouds, this step focuses on the front cover and, in some lessons, the title page and the back cover. Children are guided by questions and instructions to notice details, research information, check the meaning of key words and make predictions. This stage motivates and prepares children for the read-aloud in Steps 2 and 3, stimulates their interest and gives them a purpose for viewing.

Step 2 and 3 (While-Viewing): Listen and Watch A and B

Listen and Watch A The aim of the first viewing is for children to enjoy the experience of listening to and watching the picturebook creator reading aloud. They are informed that they are not expected to understand every word but to focus on the overall meaning. It is important that a virtual connection is created with the creator at this stage.

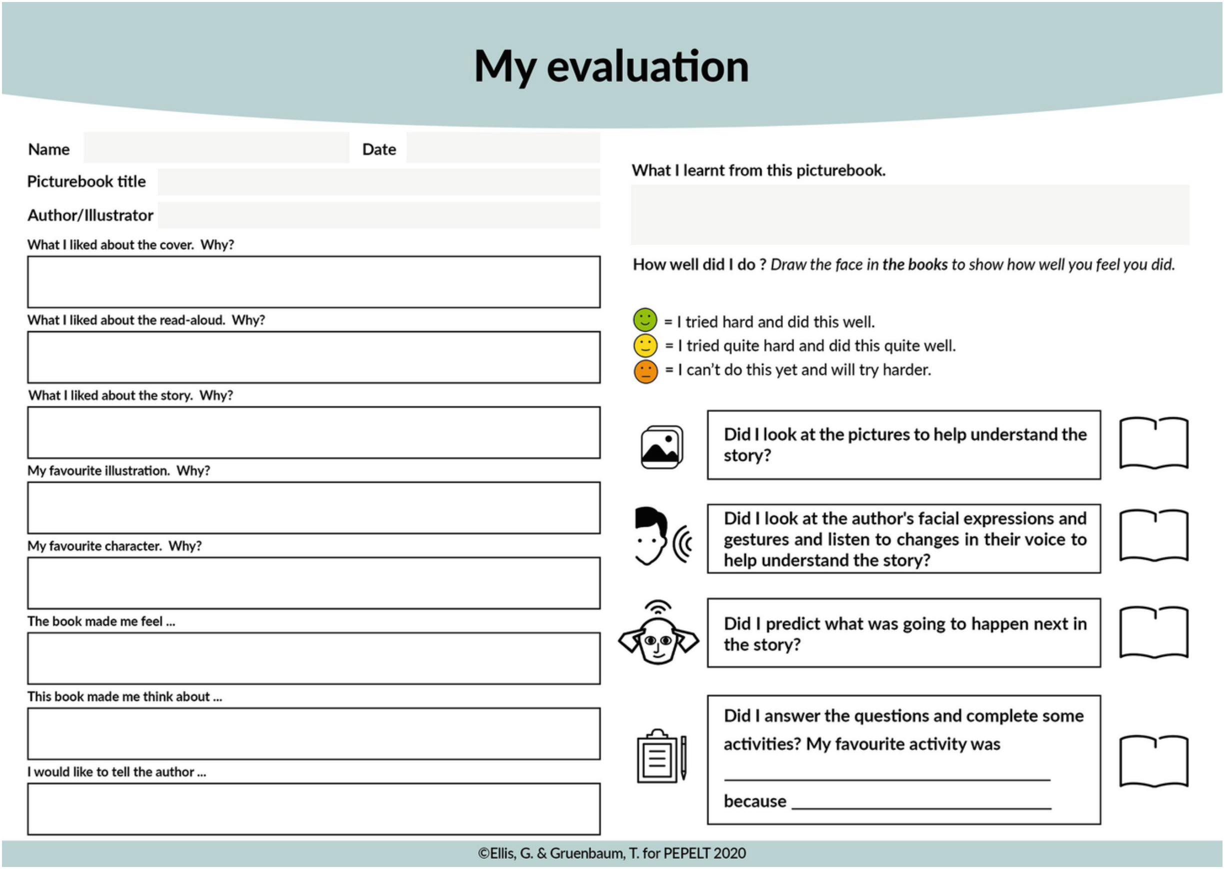
Listen and Watch B During the second viewing, children are scaffolded to check their understanding and focus on more specific information by answering literal and inferential questions. These are designed to overcome the gaps in read-alouds where the picturebook illustrations and reader’s voice are separated from their facial expressions. The main aim of this stage is to develop viewing and comprehension subskills as well as observation skills. Children are encouraged to use the pause and replay functions to review and reflect on their responses.

Step 4 (Post-viewing): Add Your Voice

This stage encourages children to review the picturebook story, and to expand and personalize the read-aloud experience by making cross-curricular and intercultural connections and to think about the author’s purpose. Activities involve children in critical and creative thinking, discovering, contrasting, inferring, analysing feelings and emotions.

Step 5 (Post-viewing): Share and Evaluate Your Work

In Stage 5, some classes may be able to come together in real time to share and evaluate their work with their classmates and teacher to make their learning motivating and collaborative and to create a virtual community of English language learners. Children share their personal responses to the read-aloud and review, reflect on and evaluate their learning experience (Fig. 8.9). This enables children to develop metacognition and to deepen and apply what they experienced during the e-lesson in preparation for their next e-learning journey (Salmon, 2013), that is, their next picturebook e-lesson.



My evaluation

Name

Date

Picturebook title

Author/Illustrator

What I liked about the cover. Why?

What I liked about the read-aloud. Why?

What I liked about the story. Why?

My favourite illustration. Why?

My favourite character. Why?

The book made me feel ...

This book made me think about ...

I would like to tell the author ...

What I learnt from this picturebook.

How well did I do ? *Draw the face in the books to show how well you feel you did.*

🙂 = I tried hard and did this well.
🙂 = I tried quite hard and did this quite well.
😐 = I can't do this yet and will try harder.

Did I look at the pictures to help understand the story?

Did I look at the author's facial expressions and gestures and listen to changes in their voice to help understand the story?

Did I predict what was going to happen next in the story?

Did I answer the questions and complete some activities? My favourite activity was

____

because __________________________

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Fig. 8.9 My evaluation

A final option is the step, *Want more*, which enables children to choose extension activities such as art, craft or research-based activities, as well as tasks connected to themes contained in the picturebook.

Access and Motivation

Salmon (2013) refers to the importance of access and motivation at the start of an online learning journey. Teachers and children may be unfamiliar with and lack confidence to use an online video picturebook lesson so this framework has carefully scaffolded the way the e-lesson can be accessed and how it can be completed. Each mini picturebook lesson has its own web page and a unique link which teachers can send to the children via their parents’ or caregivers’ email address or share it via the school’s website or online platform. A QR code is also included for children working on mobile devices such as their parents’ or caregivers’ smartphones or other handheld devices.

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4 Conclusion

Online video picturebook read-alouds by creators have not, to our knowledge, been used for PELT in a principled and systematic way. The global COVID-19 pandemic provided the catalyst to analyse their creative and educational potential for primary English e-learning which will undoubtedly continue to an extent in the future. The criteria developed for selecting online video read-alouds and the picturebook e-lesson framework can be applied and adapted to teachers’ own contexts and potentially have a long-lasting impact on accessing and using authentic children’s literature in PELT globally.

Such a fusion of the best in trade publishing with effective pedagogy makes an innovative, flexible, and motivating approach to reimagining picturebook pedagogy in PELT through e-learning. However, for video picturebook read-alouds to be exploited effectively in the future for both e-learning and in face-to-face contexts, systematic focus on these areas is required on future pre- and in-service teacher education courses. Most importantly, as access to children’s literature in PELT is a significant issue globally, the e-learning materials make picturebooks and English accessible to children who often have neither. Statistics from the Picturebooks in European Primary English Language Teaching (PEPELT) website provide evidence that the mini e-lessons have been viewed by teachers, parents/caregivers from all over the world. As Opal Dunn (2016), winner of the British Council’s ELTons 2020 Award for Outstanding Achievement, advocates, ‘Children need picturebooks if they are to attain wellbeing and their holistic potential. Attitudes and interests are formed early and to hold and enjoy some picturebooks during these years should be one of children's rights' (p. 22).

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9. Building in Assessment for Learning to Existing Primary ELT Practice

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Keywords Primary school – Assessment – Assessment for learning – Autonomy – English language teaching

1 Introduction

Most innovations that come into English language teaching from other fields undergo modifications that will allow them to fit into the different geographical, cultural and institutional contexts that exist in our profession. It is timely, therefore, to reflect on Assessment for Learning, a development within formative assessment which stimulated much innovation in mainstream education during the early years of the twenty-first century. It is, at the time of writing, an area of growing interest in primary English language teaching (ELT), and therefore it is useful to reflect on the spirit in which it operates and in what ways it can be interpreted and adapted by the ELT world without being distorted out of true existence.

This chapter focuses on children learning English as another language in the primary-school age range, both in public and private institutions, in the range of age five to twelve.

The definition of assessment used for the purposes of this chapter is taken from Rixon and Prošić-Santovac (2019): ‘principled ways of collecting and using evidence on the quality and quantity of people’s learning’ (p. 1).

This definition is broad enough to take in assessment activities of all sorts, which could include class tests, informal observation of children’s work in class, scrutiny of homework or work in a portfolio, or simply asking children to indicate how confident they are feeling about the content of an ongoing lesson. It also leaves open the many different purposes for which evidence may be collected. This breadth and flexibility are vital to the discussion of AfL that follows.

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2 Current Issues and Research

Assessment for learning is often seen as an innovation within the tradition of formative assessment. This chapter aims to show the features which mark it out as an approach that could be especially attractive to primary school level language teachers.

As is well attested, formative assessment contrasts with summative assessment (see Hughes, 1989). Formative assessment is, in general terms, the practice of finding out during a course or period of teaching how the learners are progressing and achieving. The purpose of this is to allow intervention and to offer support to learners, if needed, during the learning period before it is, in a sense, ‘too late’. Summative assessment, on the other hand, takes place after a block or period of learning and has different purposes. It is backward-looking and designed to find out how well learners have taken in and can display what they were supposed to have learned. It is often associated with grading learners or awarding or withholding benefits such as certification or entry to the next stage of education.

The meaning and connotations of the term ‘formative assessment’ have developed and changed over the years since the term was first coined by Scriven (1967). If teachers are not aware of this, they may find themselves working with the more limited practices that naturally prevailed in earlier times when views of teaching, learning and appropriate methodology were very different from those of the present day. It seems worthwhile, therefore, to spell out some of the developments.

The practice of formative assessment and also the term were first put forward by Scriven (1967), a surprisingly long time ago, in a period which in language teaching terms was dominated by behaviourist views of learning and audio-lingual practices in methodology. When investigating how learners were getting on *during* the learning process the tendency in the early days was to favour testing. For many teachers (Torrance & Pryor, 1998), the application of formative assessment was understood as the administration of a series of regular tests in class. Implemented in this way, formative assessment could be compared with constantly pulling up one’s carrots to see how well they are growing. Over time, however, methods of collecting evidence of learning were extended, often led by educationists working at primary level. The greater validity for both summative and formative purposes for primary and pre-primary language learners, of sampling and observational methods combined with good record keeping was recognised and strongly argued (Rea-Dickins & Rixon, 1997; Smith, 1996).

Another aspect of formative assessment that changed was that in earlier times the focus was very much on the use that teachers, rather than learners, could make of the evidence collected. The focus was particularly on how teachers could adjust their teaching (e.g., repeat a lesson, try a different approach) following their test-led diagnosis of learner problems (usually problems, not successes). The learners’ own roles in enhancing their own learning were much less considered. However, in many contexts, learners, particularly at primary school level, began to be seen as much more at the centre of learning and therefore to need more involvement in deciding the next learning step. This focus was represented in primary ELT by authorities such as Cameron (2001) whose concept of learning-centred approaches in the primary ELT field had an important influence.

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3 Origins of Assessment for Learning

The term Assessment for Learning was made familiar in the world of mainstream education at the end of the 1990s in a series of articles and presentations by Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam of Kings College, London University (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998a, b), to whom the coinage of the term AfL and the detailed working out of the associated principles is usually traced. The proposals were further developed in books and articles by a group of educationists, including Black and Wiliam, which became known as the Assessment Reform Group (ARG). In a manifesto in the form of a poster display (Broadfoot et al., 2002, pp. 2–3), they set out ten powerful principles for the greater integration of learning and assessment in all subjects in education. The central, summarising, tenet is worded as follows: ‘Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.’ It is clear that here we are concerned with a much richer and more truly learner-centred process in assessment than had ever been articulated before. Very striking is the openness of thinking in the expression of ‘seeking and interpreting evidence’ and the emphasis on supporting future achievements rather than just remediating past and present difficulties. There is also a clear statement that learners should have a significant role. Not only is evidence to be accessible to both sets of partners, but it is also intended to be made use of by both.

The profound influence that assessment has on the motivation, self-esteem and sense of self-efficacy of learners is emphasised and the crucial influences that these in turn have on learning are in the forefront of the thinking: ‘Assessment for learning should be sensitive and constructive because any assessment has an emotional impact’ (Broadfoot et al., 2002). This has led, in many UK schools, to an overt link between AfL and promoting a Growth Mindset (Dweck, 2006) in learners, a resilient view of their own agency and potential to ‘do better’ even when currently experiencing difficulties. A central intention of AfL is that individual learners should be enabled to reflect on their learning and, with the support of their teachers, to plan their own next steps and strategies so that they could do (even) better next time. That ‘even’ in the last sentence is important since AfL is not about failure or grading learners. Those who are struggling can be given support to achieve better but the more advanced or successful learners should also be encouraged to stretch themselves further. It will be clear from the above that a great deal of the activity in AfL, both evidence-gathering and support, happens in lesson-time as an integral part of teaching and learning.

4 Implications for the Primary ELT Classroom

The description of AfL so far has been based on a model actively and officially promoted across the curriculum within UK mainstream education. The function of this chapter is, however, to discuss how it can work in primary level teaching of English as another language. From my inspection of the current primary ELT literature (see section on *Interpretations of AfL in ELT* below), as well as my discussions with primary level ELT teachers in my training roles, it seems that although there is great interest it is early days yet for AfL in our field. For many teachers, it is truly an innovation. The clearest way to proceed, therefore, seems to be to present an outline description of AfL-inspired teaching in mainstream education, against which current work within primary ELT can be compared at a later point in this chapter. This also has the advantage of covering a number of practices not yet widespread in primary ELT that some readers might find directly inspiring.

The definition of AfL cited above (Broadfoot et al., 2002) sees AfL activity as spread over three aspects of the learning cycle: where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there. Table 9.1 is my interpretation of the classroom implications of the three aspects mentioned.

Table 9.1 Activities which link to the three aspects of learning identified by Broadfoot et al. (2002)

Aspect of learning to be addressed	Typical activities
Where the learners are	**Evidence gathering:** Could be by testing but much more likely to be: Elicitation of prior learning; scrutiny of classwork and homework; Observation of children’s behaviour in class; Targeted questioning to elicit signs of (mis) understanding; Asking the children to express their levels of confidence; Asking higher order questions to gauge metacognition
Where they need to go	Making **Learning Objectives** clear to both teacher and children.
	Assessing individual weaknesses and strengths is needed so that appropriate **future action** can be taken. Teacher assessment, peer assessment, self-assessment can all be used.
How best to get there	**Effective targeted feedback** is needed from the teacher, with advice on the next steps included in it.
	Children should be gradually supported towards **self-assessment to identify the next steps in learning that they need to take.**

In later years, Wiliam and Thompson (2007) and Black and Wiliam (2009) reflected on and further systematised earlier work, drawing out the five key strategies below, which will guide discussion in the rest of this section.

1. [for teachers] Clarifying learning intentions and criteria for success
   [for learners] Understanding and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success
   [for peers] Understanding learning intentions and criteria for success

2. Engineering effective classroom discussions and other learning tasks that elicit evidence of children's understanding

3. Providing feedback that moves learners forward

4. Activating learners as instructional resources for one another

5. Activating learners as the owners of their own learning

It is notable that a third set of key agents—peers—is here identified in addition to teachers and individual learners. Peers are to be seen as interlocutors and support for others' learning.

There is space in this chapter to give only some very brief illustrations of activities that could be found in a classroom operating fully on AfL principles. The examples are all attested in the literature, but my choices have also been influenced by personal experiences as a volunteer helper in a local UK primary school over a fifteen-year period, participating in classes where AfL was a driving principle.

Central to AfL is teachers letting learners know clearly what lessons are about and what is expected of them—what counts as success (Strategy 1 above). Sharing lesson aims is seen as very important, even with younger children. Phrases such as 'What we are doing today', 'We are Learning to' (WALT) or, for older children, 'Learning Objectives' (LO) are routinely written by the teacher on the board and are used by children as headings in their notebooks or on worksheets at the beginning of a new teaching topic. These are often accompanied by a list of success criteria—things that the children are expected to do or show as a result of their learning. For younger children, the WALT acronym is often made more child-friendly by becoming the name of a mascot or cartoon figure on the wall (Fig. 9.1). Walt can also have a friend, WILF (**W**hat **I**'m **L**ooking **F**or), who reveals success criteria (Fig. 9.2). Listing of aims and objectives can of course become over-formulaic and WALT/WILF overkill is felt by critics to be a danger even though the good intentions are clear.

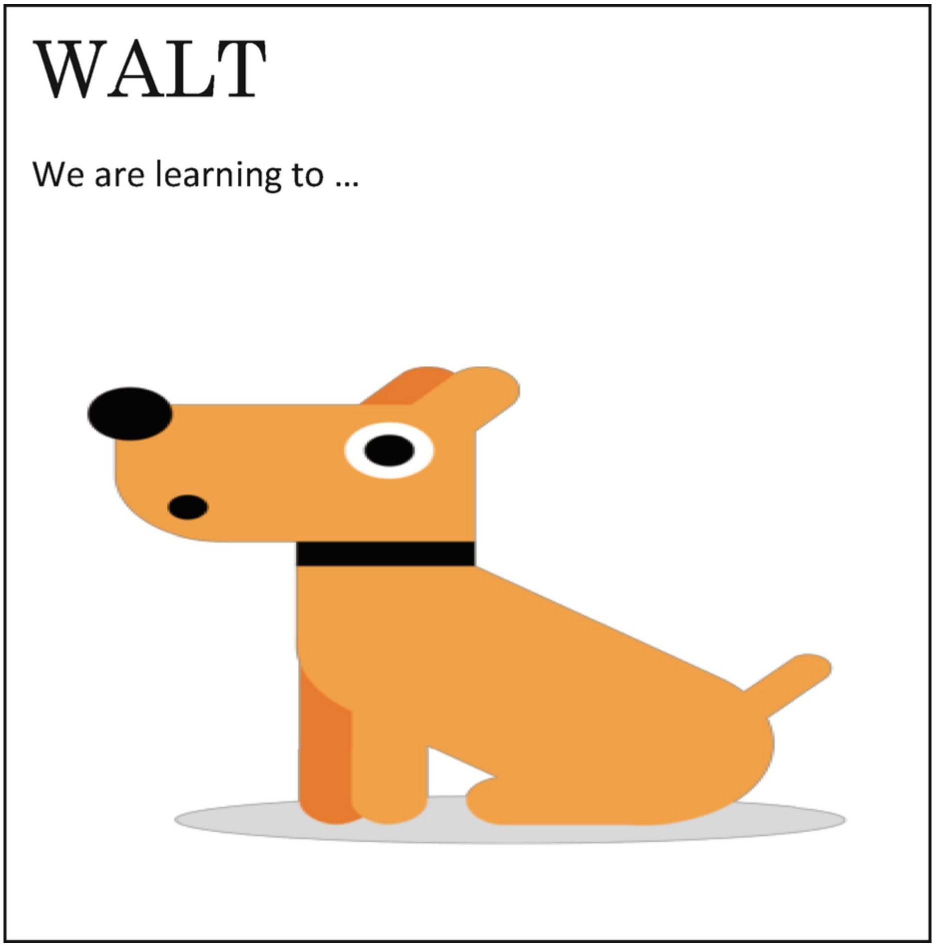
WALT
We are learning to …

Fig. 9.1 WALT, the Learning Objectives mascot

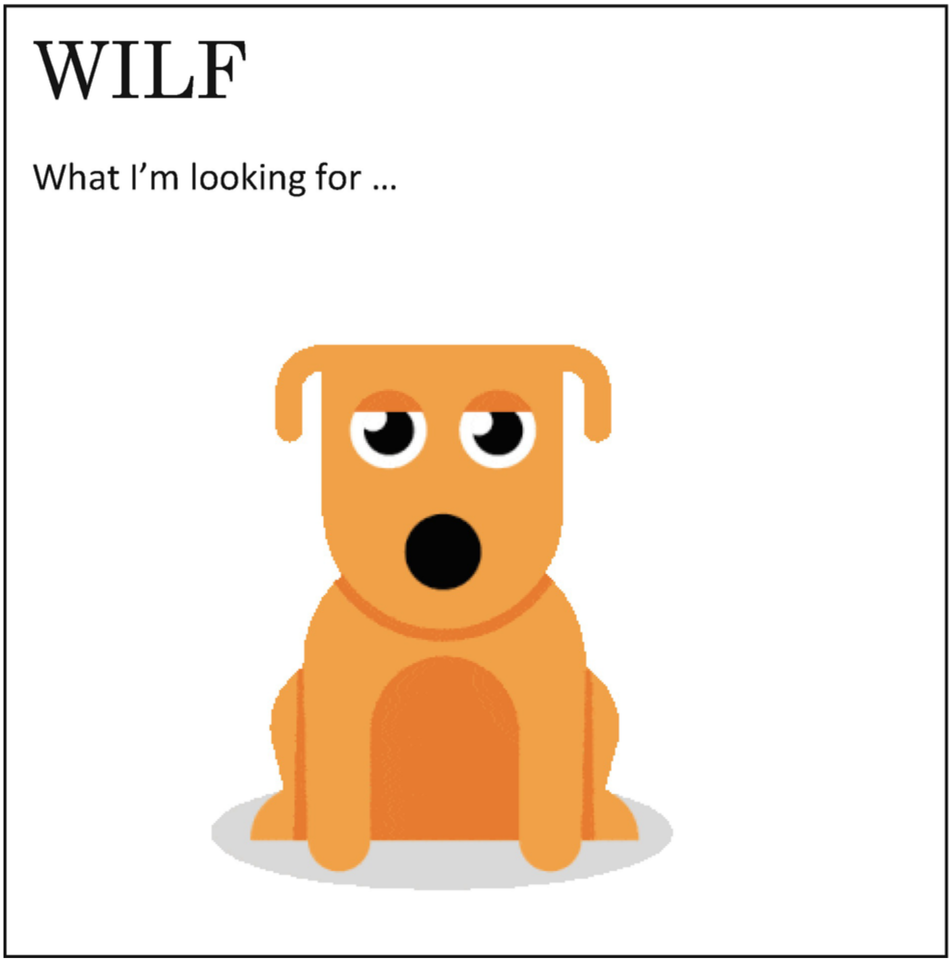

Fig. 9.2 WILF, the Success Criteria mascot

WAGOLL often completes the trio. This stands for '**W**hat **A** **G**ood **O**ne **L**ooks **L**ike', which refers to a model response or else an example of a very well-achieved piece of work from a learner in an earlier cohort, which can be used for pointing out the ways in which success criteria are met.

Another key tenet of AfL-based teaching is a *two*-way flow of information about teaching and learning (Strategy 2). Where, in many contexts, teachers are the ones providing all the feedback, especially with regard to how well *they* think children are doing, AfL encourages a counter-flow of information, from children to teacher. Several strategies can play their part in this. One is to make it more likely that answers to questions will be drawn from all children, not only from the keenest and most confident. Teachers can spread the range by such techniques as selecting a name at random (e.g., from a set of lollipop sticks with children's names on) or having a 'no hands up' rule for some lessons. A major shift in many teachers' practice has been to increase the wait-time for answers to some oral questions, allowing more thinking time before a response is attempted. This plays an essential part in collecting good evidence on learning by promoting the best quality responses from children. Learners can also be asked to let the teacher know directly how challenging they find a task. This can take place, even mid-lesson, with the teacher interjecting, for example, ‘Thumbs up if you are feeling OK with the lesson so far. Thumbs down if you are struggling a bit’. Receiving accurate feedback from the class through such signals demands the development of trust between children and teacher that no-one will be ridiculed or penalised for admitting to difficulties. This, therefore, may not be a device that has the desired effect until that atmosphere of trust is fully established. Another device often used in UK primary classrooms, where children routinely each have a small whiteboard and marker pen, is for the teacher to ask a question and then challenge the whole class quickly to put their answers on their boards and hold them up above their heads. The question needs to be one leading to a short answer that it is feasible to arrive at and write quickly but it also needs to be a significant rather than trivial question. Examples are asking for a Yes/No or True/False opinion, a prediction, a calculation or a conclusion. This technique, firstly, makes it clear that everyone is expected to have a try and, secondly, ensures that the teacher can see every child’s effort and quickly judge whether more support is needed or if it is appropriate to move to the next step in the lesson. Answers can then be quickly erased and the lesson continued.

When children have completed written classwork or homework, the system of drawing a ‘traffic light’ colour at the end is widely known. Red indicates ‘I found this difficult and need more support,’ yellow ‘so-so’ and green ‘I am confident about this’. This practice (or the similar use of ‘smiley’ faces) has also taken hold in published primary ELT course materials. The choice of colour provides good information for the teacher but judging which colour to select is also important for the child as it is a very simple form of self-assessment. This provides a good basis for later learner training towards more in-depth self-assessment, involving consideration by children of what they have done well and of aspects to which they need to pay special attention next time.

Clearly, when children are struggling or showing signs of confusion, teachers should not simply acknowledge the difficulty but then plough on. They need to take action. This requires a high level of familiarity and facility with their material and methods so that they can act quickly to re-frame an explanation or use a better example. All of this can be stressful.

Feedback on success is, of course, still needed from the teacher (Strategy 3). Feedback on an activity or completed a piece of work, under AfL, is seen as more effective if it is verbal and individual rather than just a raw mark or grade. Further, the verbal feedback should be specific and more than general praise or encouragement, which feels good but does not help children towards a next step. Children need to know in exactly which ways they have succeeded or need to improve. Direct feedback and advice have an important place, but learners should also be helped to work out for themselves what steps they can take next. More developed feedback frameworks, some provided by educational publishers, may involve ‘dialogic marking’, based on a feedback form with space for several written exchanges between the teacher and the individual child in which they share views of work done. An example can be seen in Table 9.2, which is a reconstruction of an authentic example made available to the author by a teacher colleague.

Table 9.2 A framework for dialogic marking

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Story Time:</th></tr>
<tr><th>Success criteria</th><th>Pupil comments</th><th>Teacher comments</th></tr>
<tr><td>Did your story have a clear beginning, middle and end?</td><td>√ I think so. I like my ending!</td><td>I agree about the ending—very exciting—but I was not quite sure exactly what was happening at the beginning.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Did you use speech to show how characters felt?</td><td>√</td><td>Yes, but you could have put in even more conversations than you did.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Did you use past tense verbs correctly?</td><td>√</td><td>Mostly (except for the past tense of ‘run’). Check this out!</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Pupil comments
What could I do to improve my story writing next time?
<i>I could have used more interesting vocabulary. Also, my handwriting was not good.</i></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Teacher comments
<i>A super description of your character, Tom! I really cared about him. You included everything in the Success Criteria but also added your own personality.</i>
<i>You are right about the handwriting! That’s something to work on.</i>
<i>Next time, I would like you to check your spelling carefully. You can use a dictionary.</i></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Pupil comments</td></tr>
</table>

Story Time:		
Success criteria	**Pupil comments**	**Teacher comments**
Thank you Miss. I will try to use a dictionary.		
Teacher comments *Great. You are a superstar!*		

Clearly, feedback at this level of detail and quality fits best with major pieces of work, carried out after a substantial period of learning. It takes time to prepare and requires great engagement by the teacher. Experience in the UK revealed that busy teachers trying to give detailed feedback on all written work by a class of 30 soon suffered burnout. Strategic choices therefore need to be made about which work will receive maximum engagement from the teacher and which could have a shorter, but still meaningful response.

Good feedback, and especially dialogic marking, is a model for good reflection by the children and helps them to build metacognitive skills (part of Strategy 5). They become more able to reflect and talk about their own learning. Feedback does not always have to come from the teacher. Peer-support and criticism during a process, such as pairs editing each other’s draft work (Strategy 4) not only supplies feedback but is valuable further training for self-assessment and self-determination. Thus, Strategies 4 and 5 can be seen as interacting and fulfilling several desirable functions. The ‘Two stars and a wish’ system of having children comment on each other’s drafts or completed work is an example of this that has also become well-known amongst some primary level teachers in our field. It involves looking for two positive aspects of a classmate’s work (the stars) and one area that they think needs improvement, with the critique framed in a motivating way as a wish. This system is also used by some teachers as a way of giving feedback.

5 Interpretations of AfL in ELT

The framework and educational philosophy of AfL seem to be subject-neutral. The deep-down principles can as well apply to teaching English as another language as they do to mathematics or art, though clearly some details of its implementation will be a better fit with the ELT classroom than others. Currently, however, it is hard to expand on this notion since there is a considerable shortage of evidence in the primary level ELT literature of implementation of AfL in actual practical use (Rixon, 2016). The state of the art as revealed in the literature will be discussed below.

Judging by ELT literature available at the time of writing, there is interest in generally greater integration of teaching and assessment. See, for example, two edited volumes (Nikolov, 2016; Prošić-Santovac & Rixon, 2019). Additionally, a number of journal contributions focus on the contrast between assessment *of* learning with assessment *fo*r learning. (e.g., Butler, 2016; Butler & Lee, 2010). However, extensions of assessment practice towards AfL do not seem yet to have become widespread within primary ELT. One factor might be the tendency to conservatism historically noted in primary English language teachers in some contexts concerning the range and choices of assessment practices (see Brumen et al., 2009; Prošić-Santovac et al., 2019; Rea-Dickins & Rixon, 1999). A major point made by Butler and Lee (2010) in a study conducted in South Korea is that teachers can be wary of a type of assessment (in this case self-assessment) that does not fit the paradigms that predominate in their regional contexts. See also Hung et al. (2016) for an account of similar attitudes in Taiwan regarding self- and peer-assessment.

More fundamentally influential still are views of children’s agency and capabilities, which will affect the receptiveness of teachers to more inclusive modes of teaching and assessment such as AfL. See, for example, Prošić-Santovac & Radović (2018). Ellis and Ibrahim (2021) have powerfully analysed the shifting paradigms of childhood over the past century and point out that, notwithstanding the fact that children are now recognised internationally in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as social agents with full rights to a voice that should be listened to, this recognition is not yet embedded in many societies, even among teachers. As they point out, the Convention has been criticised by some, for example, as reflecting an idealistic Western liberal view of childhood. Teachers’ views may also vary for reasons deriving from personal and institutional experience as well as cultural beliefs. From a survey carried out in 2017 and responded to by 226 teachers of English to primary and pre-primary children from 38 countries and a balance of private and public settings, Ellis and Ibrahim (2021) were able to demonstrate a diversity of perspectives on children and childhood. The focus of their research was not AfL but it seems legitimate to infer that some of the perspectives identified are less hospitable than others to AfL as an instantiation of partnership between teachers and children. For example, while some respondents' replies characterised the child as a social actor, a larger number had connotations of the child as object to be acted upon, with frequent use of the 'empty vessel' and 'blank page' metaphors of learner and learning.

Some teachers' concerns centre on children's reflective and metacognitive abilities which are also important factors in an AfL approach. A teacher quoted in Ellis and Ibrahim (2021), for example, questioned the point of sharing lesson objectives with an eight-year-old child. Part of the teachers' reticence regarding self-assessment in the study by Butler and Lee (2006) derived from beliefs that children were not capable of self-assessment, but Butler and Lee (2006) demonstrated that if children are given an appropriately concrete and here-and-now stimulus (e.g., a specific concrete CAN-DO rather than a hypothetical question) they are able to give meaningful self-assessment responses. Ellis and Rixon (2019) address a similar concern in the possibly even more contentious area of teaching pre-primary-age children. In her account of appropriate support for reflection in a programme for four- and five-year-olds attending out-of-school English lessons at the British Council in France, Ellis (in Ellis and Rixon 2019) shows that even very young children working within the Plan-Do-Review teaching cycle promoted by the HighScope approach (Wiltshire, 2012) are capable of reflection if provided with concrete 'props' to help expression (e.g., puppets, drawings, modelling) and are asked very specific questions. We may therefore expect that *a fortiori*, older primary children would have similar or superior capacity for reflection and metacognition regarding their language learning.

A large 'elephant in the room' issue is that many practices in AfL such as self- and peer-assessments, dialogic marking and reflections normally require the use of the child's first language by both teachers and children. In teaching cultures where a strong belief in 'English only' teaching prevails (Hall & Cook, 2013), L1 use may raise concerns in parents/caregivers and other stakeholders in education unless the rationale for its use is acceptably explained. In other contexts, L1 use is not feasible for other reasons, for example in multilingual classrooms or situations in which the teacher is not competent in the L1 used by the children. These should be recognised as constraints on the teacher's side concerning use of AfL rather than as evidence in itself that young children are not capable of reflection and metacognition.

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6 Challenges for Teachers and Professional Development Needs

In most contributions to the primary ELT literature to date just one or two components of the full repertoire of AfL activities such as self- and peer assessment are singled out for discussion (Butler, 2016, 2018; Butler & Lee, 2006, 2010). In discussion of AfL in the context of teacher education, Rixon (2017) posits a substantial transition period before ELT professionals interested in fully integrating AfL with their teaching would gain full ownership and fluency in its application. The only substantial account of an exploration of AfL in a comprehensive form found at the time of writing is that by Britton (2021) which traces the emerging understandings and adoption of preferred AfL practices by a group of primary level English teachers who received training in AfL and then were allowed to find their own paths over a period of time. The cohort (8) was small and the context—a private language school in Poland—clearly cannot be a close match for all primary level English programmes. However, the account given resonates and seems likely to represent the type of experience that many primary English teachers will have on making a start with AfL. The teachers varied regarding which particular aspects they favoured but their introduction to AfL seems to have been positive for all.

Because full-scale AfL is a dynamic process, integrated into the teaching of every lesson and requiring on-the-spot decisions about the best action, one of the most urgent and challenging skills needed by teachers wishing to implement it to its fullest is diagnostic competence (Britton, 2021; Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004). In AfL terms, this means the ability to spot a difficulty, or sometimes an opportunity, in real time while teaching and the flexibility and confidence to respond usefully to that unplanned moment.

One difference between many primary ELT contexts and the original testbeds for AfL might affect the comparative pace of change even where the professional climate is very favourable to AfL. This concerns investment in time, effort and funding at a national or an institutional level.

In the UK, for example, because the innovation was approved by the Department of Education, considerable financial and professional development support was put in place for state schools from the beginning and school assessment policies and practices are put under close scrutiny in school inspections. The same amount of resources and attention—both welcome and unwelcome—cannot be guaranteed to be in place in other contexts.

However, regarding key concepts and principles within AfL, there are ways in which some primary level teachers of English are already well equipped to integrate learning and assessment in ways that fit well with AfL and are already doing so, though perhaps under different labels. As early as the mid-1990s, primary and pre-primary English language teaching specialists were advocating methods of collecting evidence of learning other than testing. Smith (1996), in particular, argued for sampling and observation which did not interfere with, and positively supported, teaching and learning. Rea-Dickins and Rixon (1997, 1999) and Rea-Dickins and Gardner (2000) were also pointing out the merits of observation, work sampling, running record keeping, and qualitative reporting.

Learning to learn (Ellis & Ibrahim, 2015) and autonomy (e.g., Little et al., 2017) have in some contexts become powerful and related movements within primary school English language learning. They can be seen as having the same aims as AfL in supporting children in becoming more self-sufficient, able to self-regulate and to direct their own learning. Elements such as the development of the capacity for reflection, for metacognitive thinking and the promotion of resilience concerning difficulties faced are common to all three.

Regarding resources that may have been in long use by some teachers, the European Language Portfolio (ELP) materials Junior Version has for many years provided a framework for children to engage in reflection and self-assessment regarding their knowledge of one or several languages. In this they are supported by visual cues and very explicit statements about learning to which they can respond. ELP use differs from AfL in its timing in relation to teaching and learning since, typically, the ELP helps create a profile, which is essentially a summative statement of the results of long-term language learning. However, the props, the visual supports such as tick-charts and cartoons with speech-bubbles containing CAN DO statements through which children are helped to express themselves can provide a model for some types of AfL support material that teachers might wish to create. ‘CAN-DO’ statements are by now a mainstay of many primary English language teaching materials. They can be a crude form of self-assessment if they do not also ask the child to show evidence of a claimed ability, but they do form an accessible start for children who are just learning to think about their own learning.

7 Conclusion

AfL seems to be a true innovation in that, in spite of interest, there has not so far been a high take-up of AfL in primary level ELT classrooms. However, teachers already working in child-centred modes such as Plan-Do-Review, learning to learn, and the development of autonomy will find many overlaps both in philosophy and techniques.

Finally, it should be remembered that AfL is not incompatible with other assessment systems and is not intended as a replacement for them since its purpose is different. National examinations and school tests will still exist and be used to achieve their different ends such as certification and entry to the next stage of education. The main area in which AfL might be seen as a challenge to tests and examinations is in its promotion in learners of resilience and a clear understanding about their own learning, something not notably promoted by conventional tests and exams.

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10. Expanding the Role of Self-Assessment: From Assessing to Learning English

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1 Introduction

In recent years, self-assessment has gained increasing attention among educators and policy makers focused on early education, including many ELT professionals at the primary school level. Self-assessment is generally understood as ‘internal or self-directed’ activities concerning learners’ own abilities, processes, and outcomes (Oscarson, 1989, p. 1). It is therefore distinguished from other types of assessments that are conducted by others such as teachers and peers. Self-assessment is often considered a low-stakes form of assessment, which makes it suitable for children who are vulnerable when it comes to assessment results (Butler, 2016). The growing attention to self-assessment also relates to educators’ recent interests in learner-centred language education and *assessment for learning* (using assessment to directly assist learning) rather than *assessment of learning* (using assessment as a measurement tool) (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Butler, 2016).

Various types of descriptors, some of which correspond to established proficiency frameworks or guidelines, are available for teachers of children as language learners. For example, in Europe, *Collated Representative Samples of Descriptors of Language Competences Developed for Young Learners* was prepared for children (aged 7–10 and 11–15 years) based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2018). In the United States, the *Can-Do Statements for Communication and Intercultural Competence* was developed by the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines and performance descriptors for learners (NCSSFL, 2017). Outside of Europe and the United States, various descriptors have been developed regionally as well. In Japan, for example, descriptors have been developed based on a Japanese version of CEFR (referred to as CEFR-J) (Negishi et al., 2013). Coursebooks and other published materials for children learning English often contain some form of self-assessment items and activities.

Despite the increased attention to self-assessment for children, self-assessment has not always been implemented systematically and meaningfully in classrooms (Nikolov & Timpe-Laughlin, 2020). One potential reason for the uneven uptake is that teachers often do not seem to fully understand why and how self-assessment should be introduced in their classrooms (Becker, 2015). They also seem to question whether self-assessment can reflect children's abilities and performance sufficiently because of the subjective nature of self-assessments and the potential lack of accuracy (Butler, 2016).

Importantly, the concerns raised by teachers regarding the subjectivity and accuracy of self-assessment stem primarily from a measurement-oriented notion of assessment (assessment of learning) rather than a learning-oriented notion of assessment (assessment for learning) (Butler, 2016). Self-assessment can be implemented as a measurement tool for English-learning children, of course, but its real benefit is as a learning tool. This chapter describes the most recent innovations and current understandings of self-assessment both as a measurement tool and as a learning tool, but it places more emphasis on the latter. It discusses why and how self-assessment should be used in the primary English language classroom by offering explanations based on recent theoretical and empirical advances in knowledge.

When discussing the successful use of self-assessment with children, both developmental factors and social-emotional factors warrant attention. Most research on self-assessment, particularly in the domain of second/foreign language learning, has been conducted among teen learners and adults. However, children's cognitive and metacognitive developments play a critical role in understanding the role and mechanism of self-assessment. As described below, children develop mature beliefs of competence and self-efficacy earlier than had been previously thought, and younger children are capable of self-assessing their abilities and performance as long as certain conditions are met (Muenks et al., 2018). Moreover, while Oscarson's (1989) description of self-assessment as a form of assessment that allows learners to engage in 'internal or self-directed' activities (p. 1) may resonate with general perceptions of self-assessment, self-assessment is increasingly viewed as a social and emotional activity rather than an individual activity (Andrade & Brown, 2016), as explored in more detail below. Learners' self-assessment responses are greatly influenced by several factors, including expectations of their teachers and parents/caregivers, peer relations, classroom environments (e.g., a competitive environment), and societal and cultural practices and norms. Therefore, creating a trusting and constructive environment for self-assessment is an important concern when implementing it in order to maximise its potential effect on children's language learning.

The following section provides important theoretical background on self-assessment and describes various formats of self-assessment. Next, the chapter discusses the use of self-assessment as a measurement tool and as a learning tool in turn, while paying specific attention to developmental and socio-affective environmental factors. The chapter concludes with research-based practical suggestions for teachers concerning how to use self-assessment in their classrooms. In this chapter, 'children' refers to primary school learners aged 6–12, unless otherwise specified.

2 Current Issues and Research

Theoretical Background of Self-Assessment

While self-assessment is generally conceived of as ‘internal or self-directed’ activities concerning learners’ own abilities, processes, and outcomes (Oscarson, 1989, p. 1), Andrade (2019) argues that *feedback* generated by self-assessment for promoting learning should be the central purpose of self-assessment. Indeed, the potential benefit of self-assessment for formative purposes has been acknowledged for quite some time (Oscarson, 1989).

Self-assessment has often been associated with *self-regulated learning* and *self-efficacy*, especially if its focus is on the *process* of learning. A recent meta-analysis conducted by Panadero et al. (2017) indicates that self-assessment interventions have positive effects on both the self-regulation and the self-efficacy of learners.

Self-regulated learning is defined as ‘the processes whereby learners personally activate and sustain cognitions, affects, and behaviours that are systematically oriented towards the attainment of personal goals’ (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011, p. 1). *Cognition* (and *metacognition*) includes activities such as goal setting and self-monitoring, *affects* mainly means motivation such as perseverance against challenges, and *behaviours* refers to strategies such as record-keeping as well as self-initiated social learning strategies such as help-seeking. Self-regulation is considered to be ‘one of the most prevalent educational theories to explain students’ achievement’ (Panadero et al., 2017, p. 77). There are a number of theoretical models for self-regulation, but many models are composed of a pre-task phase, a performance phase, and a post-task self-reflective phase. Self-assessment should influence all of these phases because it can assist learners in internalising the targeted goals and criteria (so that they can set realistic goals and make plans to achieve the goals), accurately monitor their performance during the task, and enhance their reflection on the whole learning process and its outcomes after the task.

Another positive cognitive effect that one can expect from self-assessment is *self-efficacy*. *Self-efficacy* refers to ‘individuals’ confidence in their ability to organise and execute a given course of action to solve a problem or accomplish a task’ (Muenks et al., 2018, p. 25). Not surprisingly, there is substantial evidence indicating positive relationships between learners’ self-efficacy and their academic achievement, suggesting a close tie between self-efficacy and self-regulation (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Self-assessment should improve learners’ self-efficacy because it gives them opportunities to better understand the requirements of the task at hand, leading to a greater chance that they will perform the task successfully. According to Bandura's (2010) social cognitive theory, obtaining such successful experiences is one of the major factors that increase one's self-efficacy, which in turn leads to higher achievement, and vice versa.

Formats of Self-Assessment

Various formats of self-assessment have been implemented in practice. Some formats are meant primarily for learning purposes, but others are clearly designed for measurement purposes. According to Butler (2016, pp. 305–306), major self-assessment formats can be classified by the following five dimensions and characterised by where they fall on the continua of these dimensions: (a) domain setting, (b) scale setting, (c) goal setting, (d) focus of assessment, and (e) method of assessment.

Domain can be defined very generally (e.g., 'I am good at English'), or more specifically (e.g., 'I can ask questions in class'). It can be even more contextualised and target a specific task (e.g., 'I can play 'Simon says' in class').

Scale setting can be discussed by focusing on two elements: (a) the number of levels and (b) the degree of specificity of the description of each level. The scale can be set in various ways, ranging from a dichotomy ('I can do' format) to a Likert scale with multiple levels. While some self-assessment scales offer minimal to no descriptions for each level (e.g., smilegrams are often used for children without specifying what each level refers to), others—referred to as *descriptive rating scales*—offer more detailed descriptions for each level. Self-assessment grids reflecting the CEFR are examples of descriptive rating scales. In general, having detailed information in each level helps learners respond; however, children may need assistance from teachers to comprehend the descriptions. Items that include negation such as 'not always' can be especially confusing for children.

The third dimension of self-assessment, *goal setting*, can be characterised by paying attention to the process of defining goals. In some self-assessments, the goals and items can be completely predetermined by teachers, while in other types of self-assessment the goals and items are constructed through negotiation between the teachers and children. In other types of self-assessment, learners can have even greater autonomy in determining the goals and constructing items. Granting greater autonomy to learners may be a potential threat to validity from the assessment-of-learning point of view, but it is a critical factor for the assessment-for-learning point of view (Butler, 2016), as discussed in detail below.

Focus of assessment, the fourth dimension, refers to whether the self-assessment is designed as either more product-oriented or more process-oriented. Can-do statements usually focus more on the product or outcome. However, self-assessment can be embedded in the sequence of a task (e.g., a series of drafts in a story writing task for upper primary learners) and thus enable children to monitor the process of their performance during the task.

Finally, *method of assessment* concerns whether the self-assessment is conducted as an individual activity or as a more collaborative activity. Self-assessment items can be developed in collaboration with teachers and peers or administered in a way that invites others to participate (e.g., sharing the self-assessment results with others). From a sociocultural theoretical point of view, recognizing the gap between one's current level and potential level of learning with the help of capable others is considered critical for advancing learning (Vygotsky, 1934/1978).

Self-Assessment as a Measurement Tool

Although the potential merit of self-assessment for learning has been extensively discussed theoretically, empirical research on self-assessment has been largely conducted from the measurement perspective. In particular, research concerning the accuracy of learners' responses has been dominant (Andrade, 2019). The correlations between self-assessment and criterion measures (e.g., objective test scores, teacher judgements, etc.) are generally positive, although correlation coefficients vary greatly. Various factors are thought to influence the accuracy of learners' self-assessment responses, including measurement-related factors (e.g., item construction and assessment formats, as described above), intrapersonal factors (age, proficiency levels, personality, etc.), and social-affective factors (educational systems, social attitudes towards competence, etc.).

Of particular relevance to the discussion at hand is the role of learner age on the accuracy of self-assessment. Research focusing on children has shown that accuracy increases with age but not in a linear fashion. Younger children tend to overrate their ability and performance in general (Andrade, 2019; R. Butler, 2005; Y. Butler, 2016, 2018). Children’s self-appraisals are high during the preschool and early primary school years but tend to decline at around age 7–9 and drop again at around age 11–13. The accuracy of children’s perceived competency starts increasing at around age 8, when they begin to use social comparison to judge their competency. Children use social-comparative information to judge their *performance* by around age 7, but it is not until they reach age 11–13 that they use social-comparative information sufficiently to judge their *abilities* (Butler, 2005).

For a long time, children’s tendency to overestimate their ability and performance was primarily attributed to their lack of cognitive maturity—the egocentric nature of children’s thinking—an attribution that was perhaps in part due to the great influence of Piaget’s (1926/1930) cognitive theory. Piaget stated that children at the preoperational stage (ages 2–7) rely heavily on concrete reasoning and intuition. At the concrete operational stage (ages 7–11), children gradually operate logical thinking and consider others’ perspectives (Piaget, 1926/1930).

While there is no question that underlying cognitive maturity plays some role in children’s accuracy of self-assessment responses, it has also been found that children’s self-evaluative abilities vary depending on the domains and types of tasks that they are asked to evaluate and on the context where self-assessment is conducted. Children’s accuracy of self-assessment is higher for tasks that they are familiar with and for tasks that require fewer cognitive resources to complete. Children as young as 4–5 years old, who were once thought to be incapable of evaluating their performance based on temporal comparisons (i.e., comparing their current performance to their past performances), can do so as long as the task is meaningful and interesting to them. Children who have intensive opportunities to interact with other children tend to use social-comparative information more accurately and are less ‘ego-centric’ when they evaluate their performance. Moreover, children who have more experience with systematic and regular use of self-assessment and those who have greater experience with self-assessment across different domains (e.g., maths, science, language arts, etc.) more accurately self-evaluate their performance and abilities. Children with higher proficiency levels benefit more (i.e., become more accurate) from greater exposure to self-assessment (Butler, 2016; Butler & Lee, 2010).

Children’s accuracy of self-assessment also increases if self-assessment is conducted in a specific and contextualised manner. The process of responding to self-assessment can be challenging for children. Consider, for example, what is involved in responding to a general item such as ‘I can understand TV shows in English’ using a Likert scale: One has to (1) comprehend what the item refers to (e.g., what does ‘understand TV shows’ refer to?); (2) retrieve and synthesise recent incidents of watching TV shows; (3) set a reference point (e.g., in relation to others’ performance, one’s own past performance, or one’s own goals); and (4) determine each scale and make a decision (e.g., what is the difference between ‘very well’ and ‘well’?). Although how children arrive at their judgements on self-assessments is not yet totally clear, Butler (2018) found that for general (decontextualised) descriptors, such as the example above, children (aged 8–12 in Japan in her study) often interpreted and contextualised the descriptions based on their own experiences, goals, and expectations, resulting in variability and less accuracy in their responses. She further indicated that self-assessment conducted in a decontextualised manner did not necessarily reflect children’s self-efficacy or self-confidence. Highly confident children may judge themselves lower because they may set a high goal. In contrast, when self-assessment is conducted in a concrete, task-specific, and contextualised manner immediately after the task, children made their judgement based on the task at hand, leading to greater accuracy in relation to the task performance (Butler, 2018). Task-specific, contextualised self-assessments were also found to be less influenced by children’s affective factors such as motivation, anxiety, and confidence (Butler & Lee, 2006).

As mentioned, self-assessment is increasingly considered a social activity (rather than an individual activity) that involves parents/caregivers, teachers, and peers (Andrade & Brown, 2016). Children’s accuracy of self-assessment, often measured by how well their self-assessments correlate with their teachers’ judgements as well as other measures, is influenced by perceived expected outcomes of the children themselves as well as by their teachers, parents/caregivers, and society. Willingness or motivation to engage in self-assessment affects the accuracy of self-assessment, but the motivation itself is influenced by parents/caregivers, teachers, and peers, which in turn are embedded in larger societal and cultural norms and expectations. For example, some cultures believe that children’s achievement is attributable to their effort rather than their innate ability (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992). One could imagine that such cultural beliefs could greatly influence children's responses to self-assessment items. Furthermore, depending on culture, children may mask their judgement if it is considered undesirable to give oneself a positive evaluation, especially in public (Butler, 2016).

Self-Assessment as a Learning Tool

Research treating self-assessment as a measurement tool has unquestionably assumed that higher accuracy in children's self-assessment response is desirable. From a learning-oriented point of view, however, this premise may not be very important. In social cognitive theory, *calibration* —the degree of consent between one's self-efficacy and true ability is considered important (Schunk & Usher, 2011). The theory predicts that self-evaluating one's ability as being slightly higher than it really is (i.e., having higher calibration) can increase motivation and achievement. Despite there being a substantial amount of clinical and experimental studies on calibration, Andrade (2019) argued that these studies may have limited implications for the classroom, mainly due to the inauthentic nature of the tasks used in the experiments and experimental conditions in which participants are not usually allowed to self-regulate their own learning. Indeed, there is some evidence indicating that accurate prediction of one's performance may not necessarily lead to achievement (Andrade, 2019).

Moreover, the traditional notions of validity and reliability may not be essential for assessment for learning, or they may need to be reconceptualised when assessment is used primarily for learning. For assessment for learning, the central concern is the extent to which assessment can provide information to enhance children's learning (Brookhart, 2003). According to Brookhart, children are not merely objects of assessment, and interpretation of the assessment results and subsequent actions taken by teachers and learners are all part of the validity concerns. Moreover, the goal of validity is 'an understanding of how students' work compares to "ideal" work (as defined in the learning objectives) and/or effective use of that information for further learning' (p. 9), rather than an accurate inference of the students' performance. Further, reliability of assessment for learning concerns 'sufficiency of information' rather than 'consistency over irrelevant factors' (Brookhart, 2003, p. 9).

As discussed above, the value of self-assessment as a learning tool is supported by theories on self-regulation and social cognitive theory (self-efficacy). Self-assessment can be considered an essential tool for *children's* learning because children show substantial improvement in self-regulated abilities during their preschool and primary school years (Morrison et al., 2010). Self-assessment as a learning tool also resonates well with sociocultural theory in that self-assessment allows learners to identify and narrow the gap between their current state of understanding/performance and the targeted goals (Vygotsky, 1934/1978).

Although empirical research examining the effect of self-assessment on children's second/foreign language learning is scarce, the limited evidence that is available indicates the positive effect of self-assessment, consistent with research in domains other than second/foreign language learning among children, teenagers and adults. Butler and Lee (2010) implemented a self-assessment for a formative purpose every two weeks for a semester to sixth-grade English language learners in South Korea and found a positive effect on both their English learning and their confidence. However, qualitative analysis of the study revealed complicated influences from the classroom environments and teachers' attitudes towards self-assessment. The two teachers participating in Butler and Lee (2010) taught in two contexts that differed substantially in their school/classroom environments. Specifically, one was a highly competitive school located in an affluent area, whereas the other was a less competitive school located in a working-class area. The teacher working in the competitive environment found it difficult to implement self-assessment for a formative purpose and believed that, in order for her learners to take the self-assessment seriously, simply emphasizing the learning benefits of self-assessment was insufficient; she felt that self-assessment somehow had to be tied in with other assessments or grading. It seems important for teachers to clarify their expectations for children's self-assessment and to create classroom environments in which students can comfortably reveal information that would be helpful for their learning. In Raider-Roth (2005), for example, sixth-grade students in the United States deliberately decided which information to disclose in their self-assessment depending on their relationship with their teachers and peers in the classroom, suggesting that building trust between children and their teachers and peers is critical. Although Raider-Roth's study did not focus on English language learning per se, one can assume that the results of the study can be applied to primary ELT classrooms.

How self-assessment is implemented largely influences whether it can empower learners. Dann's (2002) in-depth ethnographic work at a primary school in the United Kingdom (although not in the context of second/foreign language learning) described how teachers can grant autonomy to children by helping them set goals and develop self-assessment items. The English teacher who worked at the less competitive primary school in Butler and Lee (2010), mentioned previously, added an item to the self-assessment for learning that asked children to evaluate class activities/tasks. She told the children that she revised her classroom activities/tasks based on their feedback. After the children became aware that they could influence the instruction, they started taking the self-assessment seriously.

It is important for children to fully understand the criteria of self-assessment. It is generally suggested that using peer assessment in conjunction with self-assessment can be useful because peer assessment can enable learners to better understand the assessment criteria by helping them to take an outsider's/assessor's point of view (Hung et al., 2016). However, to what extent this *learning from modeling* applies to children remains an open question. Depending on children's ages and their familiarity with peer assessment, they might find it challenging to simultaneously pay attention to their peers' performance and assess it based on specific criteria. In addition, the classroom environment and culture can greatly affect the results of peer assessment as well as of self-assessment. Most critically, children need to know how to interpret their peers' feedback and make use of it for their own learning; sufficient guidance is necessary.

The quality of feedback that learners receive through self-assessment appears to be essential for improving learning. In other words, the very purpose of self-assessment is to generate meaningful feedback that learners can then use to improve their own learning, but this process is not entirely internal and individual. Instead, learners generate feedback while interacting with others and the external environment, and children or novice learners need explicit assistance with this process.

Studies have found that simply providing a rubric or administering self-assessment to primary school children does not contribute to their further learning (e.g., Andrade et al., 2008). Teachers and peers may need to offer *external feedback* to children on their self-assessment responses so that the learners can initiate, facilitate, or deepen their *internal feedback*. How best to do so for children remains unclear, but we do know that such external feedback requires careful attention to learners' individual factors as well as their environmental factors.

3 Practical Applications

As seen above, self-assessment can be used both as a measurement tool and as a learning tool for primary school children. To ensure a reasonable level of accuracy when using self-assessment as a measurement tool for children, certain considerations are necessary, including attention to age-related factors, self-reflective experience, and social-affective factors. Creating a safe and trusting atmosphere in the classroom is a prerequisite. Contextualised item writing (e.g., tailoring items for a specific task) and administration are also critical. Children should clearly understand the criteria and wording of the items. Special care needs to be taken not to give children unnecessary negative feedback through self-assessment. Researchers now recognise that children are more vulnerable to failures and setbacks than was previously believed (Carless & Lam, 2014).

Although self-assessment can be used as a measurement tool, the real strength of self-assessment is that it can be used to enhance children's learning. Andrade (2019), for example, cautioned that using self-assessment to measure one's competency is 'only useful if students have opportunities to do something about their perceived low competence—that is, it serves the purpose of formative feedback for the learner' (p. 3); as a consequence, she strongly advocated using self-assessment formatively. Butler (2016) also saw great value in self-assessment for its formative use among children, stating that 'self-assessment should be designed in such a way that learners can understand the goals of the tasks, self-reflect on their learning in relation to the goals, monitor their process of learning, and figure out what it takes to achieve the goals' (p. 305). Butler also emphasised the critical role that teachers play in the process of successfully using self-assessment to assist children's learning. Below are six research-based pedagogical principles for primary English teachers when using self-assessment as a learning and instructional tool. As mentioned above, although younger children *can* use self-assessment with sufficient ongoing support (Ellis & Rixon, 2019), children in the mid- or upper- grades of primary school would benefit more from self-assessment due to their greater self-reflective capabilities. The following principles therefore are primarily designed for learners aged 8–12.

(1) Start with a Simple Format and Gradually Increase Complexity

Children need sufficient guidance to participate in self-assessment. It takes time for them to become familiar with the idea of self-assessing their *performance*. It may take them even longer to become familiar and comfortable with self-assessing their *abilities*. It is advisable to start with simple and concrete items focusing on one to two activities. For example, instead of ‘I can sing English songs well,’ teachers can ask children to assess themselves using the statement ‘I could sing the ABC song well today’ after singing the song. For more complicated tasks such as paired information exchange tasks that may require various abilities (including sociopragmatic skills for negotiating meaning, collaboration, and accommodation), self-assessment can start by focusing on one sub-element at a time and gradually guiding children to pay attention to other elements. Self-assessment requires relevant experiences that allow children to have temporal and social comparisons (e.g., repeating the same task) so that they can recognise improvements over time or judge their performance/abilities more objectively.

(2) Set Clear Criteria

The criteria should be clear and understandable to all children in the class. In fact, self-assessment is more effective for children’s learning if they are involved in developing the assessment criteria or rubrics. This is because children can feel greater ownership of their own learning and thereby, can feel more responsible for answering items. Teachers can enable children to choose emoticons for indicating their degrees of achievement in order to make a unique rubric (e.g., from a difficult face to a super-happy face; from a seed to a full-bloom flower, from a simple medal to a gorgeous medal, from a single ice cream cone to multiple ice cream cones, etc.). This process is not only enjoyable but also helps children to better understand what each level means.

Additionally, self-assessment items or rubrics should focus on the process rather than the outcome. For example, instead of asking children to respond to ‘I can say the alphabet’ in a dichotomous fashion (i.e., Yes or No), teachers can allow children to respond in a graded fashion (e.g., ‘I think I will be able to do it’, ‘I will be able to do it soon’, and ‘I can already do it’). For children who have already developed greater autonomy in learning, as part of self-reflecting on their performance at the end of a given class, teachers can ask them to write their own goals for the next class (e.g., ‘to ask questions in English at least three times in the next class’). To help children formulate goals that are concrete and achievable, teachers can create their own goals as a model to share with children.

(3) Use Self-Assessment Strategically to Increase Children’s Motivation, Self-Regulation, and Confidence

Self-assessment can be a great tool to motivate children, enhance their self-regulation and improve their confidence. Setting a small and achievable goal for each unit (e.g., asking children to create menus for a restaurant to learn new food-related vocabulary) can motivate children and regulate their learning. Self-assessment items should be written so that children can clearly visualise their gradual progress. For example, instead of ‘I can exchange greetings with others’, the item could be ‘I can understand when someone says, “how are you?” to me’ and then ‘I can say, “how are you?” when I greet someone’. To help children become confident and self-regulated, it is important to value their responses even if they are not entirely accurate; the accuracy of children’ responses is secondary to the quality of their responses. In large classroom contexts, children may crave the teachers’ attention. Children want the teacher to be aware of what they achieve in class. Self-assessment can therefore be used as a communication tool between the learners and their teachers.

(4) Avoid Rushing

Self-assessment is often perceived as a type of assessment that can be administered quickly. However, it is important to give children enough time to respond to self-assessment. Otherwise, they will not be able to sufficiently self-reflect on the assessment process and on their performance of the task at hand. For example, children can verbally report what they accomplished or achieved in the class to a peer or a puppet (or any hypothetical character) before responding to a self-assessment question. Verbalisation gives children an opportunity for a higher degree of self-reflection.

(5) Ensure Children Receive Sufficient Feedback

Feedback is the core of self-assessment. Be sure to provide children with individualised (external) feedback on their self-assessment responses and discuss with them how they can use the results to plan their next steps. Providing children with feedback is critical, but can be very challenging in practice, particularly for teachers who have large classes. Using digital devices is helpful, as feedback can be provided individually and instantly. Teachers may be able to collect children's feedback in real time through tablets and/or other devices and incorporate it into their instruction. Children can easily keep track of their previous self-assessment results and use them to gauge their progress.

Teachers can help learners generate their own (internal) feedback by providing scaffolding or modelling in order to facilitate learning. It is often useful to combine self-assessment with other metacognitive activities. For instance, self-assessment can be used with a digital application where children can compare their pronunciation with the teacher's model. The ultimate goal is to help children become increasingly autonomous, self-regulated learners.

(6) Create a Trusting and Constructive Environment

Self-assessment is a social-affective activity rather than an internal-individual activity. For social-affective activities to succeed, trust is required between children and their teacher as well as among peers (trust among peers is especially important if self-assessment is used in conjunction with peer assessment). Depending on culture, children may not feel comfortable disclosing their self-assessment results to their teachers and peers. Extra care needs to be taken in multicultural classrooms because of the potentially complex interplay between multiple cultures and classroom expectations. If necessary, children can imagine a hypothetical friend or another persona and report their self-reflection to that figure. Children do not have to report the result to their teacher until they feel comfortable doing so. The key point here is for children to have an opportunity to self-reflect rather than for them to report the results to their teacher or classmates.

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4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the use of self-assessment both as a measurement tool and as a learning tool. Concerns about the subjectivity and accuracy of self-assessment primarily stem from approaches focused on measuring learning. However, the central function of self-assessment should be to enhance children's learning.

Self-assessment itself can be used in innovative and strategic ways to increase children's self-regulation, self-efficacy, and learning. Self-assessment is also a social-affective activity rather than an individual mental activity. Therefore, it is important to negotiate the various ever-changing contextual and environmental constraints and situations (e.g., curriculum and standardised test requirements, expectations from policy and parents, resource availability, classroom dynamics, and advances in digital technology). As Ryan et al. (2019) state, 'innovations are constantly testing contextual limits' (p. 285). For teachers committed to cultivating autonomous learning among children, it is time to look at self-assessment with an updated understanding of its affordances.

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Part II

Innovative Practices in Early English Teacher Education

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11. Embedding ELT Within Early Childhood Teacher Education

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Keywords Whole child approach – Whole teacher approach – Collaborative teacher education programme – Transforming attitudes to ELT – Diverse linguistic competences

1 Introduction

The teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) in early childhood settings has risen sharply over recent years. What is understood by ‘early childhood education’ will differ according to context and may be known as preschool, reception, kindergarten, infant school, nursery and so on. In this chapter, the term is used in accordance with the International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO, 2011) to refer to educational programmes prior to compulsory education. Furthermore, and following the two-tiered classification established within ISCED level 0, the focus is on the second category which is concerned with educational content designed for children from age three to the start of primary education (UNESCO, 2011, p. 26). Officially, and according to the statutory guidelines available in many countries, the introduction of English (or any other foreign language) is not in any way compulsory and is at the discretion of each educational centre and the professionals working within them. As a result, little information is available to support educators and policymakers wishing to introduce EFL in pre-primary programmes (Mourão & Ellis, 2020; Mourão & Lourenço, 2015). In spite of this, and due to increasing social pressures and parental/caregiver aspirations linking English language competence with success in a globalized world (Rokita-Jaskow & Ellis, 2019), its introduction in pre-primary programmes is mushrooming, particularly across East Asia, Latin America and Europe (Mourão & Ellis, 2020). This mismatch between official positions and unofficial or invisible realities is clearly a concern when we consider the need for transparent and clear guidelines to promote effective and age-appropriate practice at this crucial age of development.

According to the ISCED descriptor, one of the principal characteristics of this educational level is that 'programmes are not necessarily highly structured but are designed to provide an organized and purposeful set of learning activities in a safe physical environment' (UNESCO, 2011, p. 26). Designing and implementing programmes which comply with this fundamental guideline requires training and in-depth understanding of how children develop and learn. This requirement is equally applicable when EFL is introduced in such programmes, to ensure that it is included in a way which is coherent with general aims and recommendations. In view of this, and considering the current lack of guidance for early childhood educators, more work is needed within the field of teacher education to promote the development of strategic and appropriate programmes designed to prepare student teachers for their future roles within early childhood contexts. Researchers have emphasized the need to prepare teachers for this task and to address the discontinuities between English language teaching (ELT) methodologies and general early childhood programmes which have been detected in different educational settings: See Cerná (2015) for a discussion in the context of the Czech Republic; Flores and Corcoll (2008) in the context of the Catalan education system, and Cortina-Pérez and Andúgar Soto (2018) in the case of Spain, to cite some recent examples. These cases testify to the need to develop a skilled workforce through professional training, which combines foreign language teacher training with knowledge of how children develop and learn during the early years (Portikova, 2015; Murphy & Evangelou, 2016; Waddington et al., 2018). This chapter contributes towards these efforts by focusing on the specific area of teacher education. It begins by addressing critical issues within this area, focusing in particular on whole child approaches and whole teacher approaches to early childhood education and development. It then presents and discusses an initiative which embeds English language teaching within a general teacher training programme at a university in Catalonia (University of Girona).

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2 Current Issues and Research

A Whole Child Approach

Early childhood educational programmes are designed within holistic frameworks which aim to support the overall development of children's cognitive, physical, social and emotional development (UNESCO, 2011). How, therefore, can ELT be incorporated effectively within this framework? The idea that CLIL (content and language integrated learning) could be the solution to this question seems to be gaining increasing support: a quick browse online searching for CLIL plus any of the keywords mentioned in the introduction (preschool, kindergarten, etc.) will provide many examples suggesting that CLIL is the most fitting way to ensure that children of this age are introduced to language in an effective and appropriate manner. The main reason stated—as indicated quite clearly by the acronym—is that content and language can be integrated smoothly within the learning experience, thus avoiding a decontextualized approach focusing on language itself. A considerable body of research has been developed on the benefits and challenges of implementing CLIL in formal educational settings since the publication of Coyle, Hood and Marsh's seminal work (2010). While a review of this literature is clearly beyond the scope of the current chapter, two interviews with Professor Do Coyle recorded within the context of teacher training programmes can help focus attention on issues which are essential to the present discussion.

In the first interview, discussing the fundamental principles of CLIL, Coyle emphasizes that some aspects can be applied to all ages and all educational levels; 'from kindergarten to tertiary level and university work' (CETAPS, 2018, 1:18–1:28). Coyle is referring, here, to 'language *for* learning' as opposed to 'the language *of* learning': in other words, to the language needed to do things or to communicate in the classroom. In an early childhood setting, this idea could be linked with the use of L2 in daily routines, where language is used within a specific context and for a clear purpose (to say '*good morning*', to express feelings), or with its use during structured activities (e.g., asking the teacher for a specific colour during a drawing activity). In this respect—considering 'language for learning'—the potential for introducing and developing language in an appropriate and contextualized way can be seen in an early childhood context. However, in an earlier interview, Coyle warns of the dangers of conceiving CLIL solely and exclusively in the traditional sense as the teaching of a specific subject (e.g., geography) through and in English (CEP de Granada, 2009, 0:20–0:33) and encourages educators to expand their horizons and not limit themselves to this narrow subject-based model. The fundamental principle, as she asserts, 'is that there's an integration between using language to learn, and learning to use language through the development of content' (2009, 1:00–1:12).

The warning about not restricting ideas to the teaching of a specific subject is particularly relevant in the context of early childhood programmes, which are designed within holistic frameworks and not within the kind of subject-based framework which tends to be used to organize learning at subsequent (compulsory) levels of education (primary school onwards). Despite recommendations by statutory bodies and early years experts, research suggests that ELT may be being conceived and implemented in some early childhood settings within such subject-based frameworks and in ways that tend to replicate the structured provision of compulsory schooling (Cerná, 2015; Flores & Corcoll, 2008). While provision may be adapted or simplified for younger children in pre-primary settings, fundamentally this practice contradicts recommendations in the early years by organizing learning around subjects rather than according to developmental needs. Resolving this contradiction is not simply a matter of thinking beyond subject-based models, since the fundamental principle of CLIL could also be problematic when we focus on the language *of* learning or 'the idea of learning to use language through the development of content' (CEP de Granada, 2009, 1:00–1:12). Although this fundamental principle would seem to be applicable to all learning, it presents problems within the context of early years and could be at odds with the holistic frameworks recommended. The reason for this is that provision in the early years should be focused first and foremost on the child and not on content: which is to say, on the development of the child's capacities as opposed to the development of content. This distinction is crucial to ensure that pre-primary provision is delivered appropriately, and to avoid the kind of 'pushdown' curriculum and pedagogy which early childhood researchers have warned against for many years (Curtis, 1998).

From this perspective, and returning to the question of how ELT can be incorporated effectively within early childhood settings, the key guiding principle is that it should link 'the learning of another language to a child's holistic development' (Mourão & Ellis, 2020, p. 3). Within a whole child approach, language is not separated from other areas of development (Donaldson, 2006), but woven into a pedagogy attending to each and every one of these areas, as described at length in *Teaching English to Pre-Primary Children* (Mourão & Ellis, 2020), which represents a valuable contribution to this field. In their presentation of key developmental areas, Mourão and Ellis (2020) draw on guidelines from UK-based benchmarks for early years providers (Early Education, 2012). While statutory and non-statutory guidelines will vary according to educational/geographical context, the categorization adopted in the UK-based context (see Table 11.1) serves as a useful indicator of what these different areas are and what aspects they cover.

Table 11.1 Key areas of learning and development within a whole child approach

Area of Learning and Development	**Aspect**
Prime Areas	
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Making relationships
	Self-confidence and self-awareness
	Managing feelings and behaviour
Physical Development	Moving and handling
	Health and self-care
Communication and Language	Listening and attention
	Understanding
	Speaking
Specific areas	
Literacy	Reading
	Writing
Mathematics	Numbers
	Shape, space and measure

Area of Learning and Development	Aspect
Understanding the World	People and communities
	The world
	Technology
Expressive Arts and Design	Exploring and using media and materials
	Being imaginative

Source: Early Education. (2012). *Development matters in the early years foundation stage (EYFS).* Open Government Licence: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence

Having taken into account the key principles discussed above, and having understood the need to design activities in line with the learning and development areas established, a key question still remains concerning what content should be worked on. It may be clear that it is crucial to focus on the child and their overall development, but educators still need to provide and develop some form of content. Researchers who have criticized subject-based or content-based approaches in the early years have done so on the grounds that this is contrary to the way children think and learn (Hurst & Joseph, 1998; Nutbrown, 1999) and can result in a practice which simply adapts or simplifies methodologies used with older children (Curtis, 1998). In response to such criticisms, other authors have suggested that the problem often lies in the way that ‘content’ is conceptualized. Experts who have contributed to transforming the internationally acclaimed early childhood curriculum (*Te Whāriki*) of New Zealand argue that ‘mainstream discourse has commonly conceptualised curriculum as content’ (Hedges & Cullen, 2005, p. 11). This resonates strongly with comments often expressed by student teachers in my own educational context (teacher education in Catalonia), complaining of the lack of curricular guidance on *what* to teach in pre-primary education (‘OK I understand the general principle, but what content are we supposed to teach?’). Hedges and Cullen (2005) emphasize that content learning is not incompatible with early childhood pedagogy if it relates to children’s interests and if content is woven into interest-based learning. The emphasis, however, must be on purposeful teaching that promotes authentic learning experiences aimed at developing children’s understandings of their experiences with the people, places and things in the world around them:

> Early childhood teachers’ professional knowledge of subjects can assist teachers to construct knowledge with children in ways that relate meaningfully to children’s prior knowledge and experience and that guide children towards rewarding lives in the contexts of their communities and cultures. (Hedges & Cullen, 2005, p. 20)

From this perspective, content cannot be prescribed by a standardized curriculum applicable to all, and needs to be designed, instead, in accordance with the prior knowledge and experiences of the specific group of learners. Furthermore, children are recognized as competent, active learners with agency, in line with the first of the ten pedagogical principles established in Mourão and Ellis’s (2020) whole child approach to early language learning.

A Whole Teacher Approach

Research suggests that current practice in early childhood settings is at odds with recommendations advocating whole child approaches to language learning. One of the key factors preventing change relates to conceptions of the role of the educator in such settings. Examples highlighted in different geographical contexts (see Introduction) suggest a prevailing tendency to deploy specialist (foreign) language teachers with little or no training in early childhood education (Cerná, 2015; Cortina-Pérez & Andúgar Soto, 2018; Flores & Corcoll, 2008). As Mourão and Ellis (2020) highlight, ‘[I]t is one of the dichotomies of the language profession: either you are a teacher of English, or you are an educator of children. It is a rarity that we have been trained to be both’ (p. 10). Within this scenario, the tendency seems to be to opt for the ‘teacher of English’ and to hope that they will be sensitive and flexible enough to adapt their methodologies to younger children. Although there is no doubt that some teaching professionals will manage to adapt their practice effectively and appropriately (whether due to an instinctive capacity to connect with young children’s needs or as a result of their own independent reading/self-training), as a general policy, the practice is inadequate and fails to comply with the basic aims of early years development and education (UNESCO, 2011) and with the guidelines for early childhood providers (Early Education, 2012) discussed above.

Professional development strategies are needed to provide specialist language teachers with the specific training needed to adapt their practice to early childhood contexts, and to provide *all* early years educators with basic training in how to introduce EFL in their settings. It would be fair to suggest that the persistent notion that the task of introducing English is the exclusive domain of the language teacher is one of the main obstacles hindering the implementation of age-appropriate strategies within such settings. In other words, this belief tends to underpin and perpetuate subject-based and teacher-led methodologies, as well as prevent or hinder the development of holistic practices in which the educator is conceived as a guide who assists learners to co-construct knowledge (Hedges & Cullen, 2005). However, it is clearly the case that not all early years professionals will feel confident enough or linguistically competent enough to contribute effectively to the task of assisting learners to co-construct knowledge in and through English. Consequently, work is not only needed to provide basic training in the '*how to*'—in how to implement pre-primary programmes—but also to bring about changes in teacher beliefs and attitudes to language learning (Ellis, 2019).

What is needed, then, is a 'whole teacher approach' which focuses simultaneously on attitudes, skills, knowledge and proficiency in a wide range of specific domains (Chen & Chang, 2006). Does this mean that *all* early childhood educators need to be proficient in English in order to contribute to the task of introducing it in settings which include this in their provision? Depending on the context, experience may suggest that this requirement would be out-of-sync with current realities in which generalist teachers may not have or aspire to have proficient levels of English. A recent study with student teachers on Early Childhood and Primary School Education degree programmes shows not only a lack of linguistic competence, but also a worrying presence of unfavourable attitudes to foreign language learning resulting from negative childhood experiences (Waddington, 2019). Although experiences will clearly differ across and within geographical contexts, these results suggest that work is needed to develop positive attitudes to language learning and teaching. From this perspective, developing a whole teacher approach means acknowledging the importance of widening teacher knowledge across all subject domains, while also attending to the need to develop positive, open and more enabling attitudes to learning and teaching. As suggested by Hedges and Cullen (2005), perhaps it is not [about] 'subjects per se, but how teachers assist children to construct … knowledge that is the central pedagogical issue for early childhood education to resolve' (p. 19). Applied to the current debate, this insight can help teacher educators to look beyond the exclusive question of teacher language competence and to consider how teachers with varying English language levels can assist children to construct their own knowledge of the language and develop their own communicative capacities.

In light of the above, acknowledging the key role of *all* early years professionals is a crucial step towards promoting more age-appropriate practice in early childhood language teaching. My review of *Teaching English to Pre-Primary Children* (Mourão & Ellis, 2020) concludes by suggesting that it would be beneficial to translate the volume into other languages 'to make the information as accessible as possible and to help promote the pedagogical principles presented among the global community of pre-primary educators' (Waddington, 2020, pp. 34–35). The prologue to a recent publication written for the Spanish pre-primary teaching community makes an explicit reference to this need to widen access and to reach beyond an exclusive English-speaking/reading community (Cortina-Pérez & Andúgar Soto, 2018). Targeting the community of early childhood student teachers and in-service teachers, the authors explain that the book has been written in Spanish precisely in order to facilitate readers' comprehension of the key theoretical and practical principles needed to contribute effectively to the task of introducing English (or any foreign language) in preschool settings. The two recent publications discussed here (Cortina-Pérez & Andúgar Soto, 2018; Mourão & Ellis, 2020) represent a valuable contribution to this field of research as well as providing clear guidelines and resources for teachers and teacher educators. With regard to the latter, and as highlighted by other researchers, more work is needed to promote the development of teacher training programmes designed in line with the latest thinking and the principles discussed throughout this chapter.

3 Practical Applications

This section presents an illustrative example showing how ELT can be embedded in generalist teacher training programmes in a way which fosters whole child and whole teacher approaches to early language education.

Implementation

A Whole Teacher Approach

The Early Childhood Education degree programme at the University of Girona (Catalonia) provides comprehensive training to prepare student teachers for their future roles as early childhood educators. Within the statutory framework regulating early years provision, the introduction of a foreign language is optional. Despite this, and as a response to the increasing presence of ELT in early childhood settings across the country, a strategic decision was taken to include an introduction to EFL within the general study programme. The compulsory subject within which this introduction is included therefore targets *all* student teachers on the programme (approximately 130 every year, including students on the Dual Degree in Early Childhood and Primary Education programme), and is entirely distinct from the minor in ELT which attracts students (maximum 30 per year) with an interest in and competence in the English language (minimum B2 required). What sets this strategy apart from practices frequently employed at other universities is that the component is delivered as part of a general annual module, in conjunction with teachers from other subject-specific areas (social sciences, mathematics, music), as well as from the Department of Pedagogy. Rather than providing a stand-alone module on ELT in the early years, this strategy applies the theoretical principles advocated by recent research: namely, the idea that foreign language learning should not be treated separately from other learning/development and should be integrated within general practice. In addition to being embedded in the format of the module itself, this key principle also underpins the content taught and the way that student performance and progress is assessed. An overview of the organizational framework of the module is provided in Table 11.2.

Table 11.2 Organizational structure of module incorporating ELT into generalist teacher education

DIVERSITAT I CONNEXIONS ENTRE ÀREAS CURRICULARS I ENTORN **(DIVERSITY AND CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CURRICULAR AREAS & ENVIRONMENT)** **2nd Year Module of Early Childhood Degree Programme, University of Girona.**		
TEACHING/CONTENT BY BLOCK		
Block	**Key content**	**Timing**
1 (Catalan)	The early years curriculum in Catalonia: key principles and areas. Implementing the curriculum in early years settings: holistic and integrated approaches	Sept–Oct

***DIVERSITAT I CONNEXIONS ENTRE ÀREAS CURRICULARS I ENTORN* (DIVERSITY AND CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CURRICULAR AREAS & ENVIRONMENT)** **2nd Year Module of Early Childhood Degree Programme, University of Girona.**		
2 (Catalan)	Programming a teaching intervention in preschool (key development areas, learning objectives, age-appropriate methodologies, etc.)	Nov–Dec
3 (Catalan)	Incorporating key issues in teaching interventions from the perspective of social studies (e.g., integrated learning, identity and otherness, families)	Jan–Feb
4 (English)	Incorporating foreign language (English) learning in existing projects	March–April
Completion of group work & preparation of final tasks (presentations, portfolio submission, peer review activity)		May–June
TUTORING/SUPERVISION OF STUDENT WORK (tutorials in L1)		
Students divided into project groups (4/5 students) and assigned a tutor (1 of the 4 teachers of the different blocks). Group tutorials provided after each block to check progress/ completion of portfolio tasks and resolve doubts Oral presentations assessed by 2 tutors (including assigned tutor) Portfolios & Individual Task (peer review) assessed by assigned tutor Final group tutorial to provide feedback on tasks and guidance for future work/practice		
STUDENT TASKS **(Group work with some individually assessed components)**		
Elaboration of a group portfolio including set tasks from each block. Design of a teaching intervention organized around a topic of the students' choice (beginning in block 2 and culminating at the end of block 4) Oral presentation to describe & illustrate the teaching intervention designed Final individual task carrying out a written review of another group's proposal		

The organization and methodology of the module present certain challenges, such as the time required to coordinate actions with other members of the team, the need to become familiar with and keep up-to-date with the content delivered in the blocks delivered by other teachers, and the skill and knowledge needed to support students during compulsory group tutorials. While the specific teachers of each block are recognized as experts in their particular domain, the whole team takes responsibility for the entire process, accompanying students and assisting them in a process of knowledge construction. Not all members of the teaching team have experience or previous knowledge in early childhood pedagogy or the other areas covered in the different blocks. Likewise, some members of the team are dissatisfied with their own level of English language competence and have little or no experience in the specific field of language teaching. What is prioritized, however, is an attitude and commitment to learning and development which aligns strongly with the principles of the ‘whole teacher approach’ advocated in the early years and the belief that what matters is how teachers assist their students to construct knowledge and develop their own skills. As a professional development strategy, this format responds to the need to provide training which brings specialist and generalist teachers together and encourages a mindset in which language learning and teaching is conceived as a collaborative task within an integrated approach to learning and development.

A Whole Child Approach

The organizational framework described above provides a context in which ELT can be embedded within early childhood education and developed according to a whole child approach. From this perspective, and before considering *what* or *how* to teach, student teachers are presented with key driving questions to help them acquire knowledge of the main objectives of early years language learning and to reflect on some of the challenges and difficulties that arise within the current educational context (see Table 11.3 for an overview of the block content and focus).

Table 11.3 Embedding ELT within early years education

NAME OF MODULE: ***Diversitat I connexions entre àrees curriculars I entorn***			
(Diversity and connections between curricular areas and the environment)			
BLOCK 4: Introducing ELT within an integrated early years approach			
Session (90” class)	**Content**	**Focus**[a]	**Portfolio Tasks**
1	Foreign languages in the early years: the European context & the Catalan Curriculum. Key objectives & principles	Why?	4.1 (Pedagogical justification)
2	The challenges of introducing English at preschool: specialist or generalist?	Who?	4.1

NAME OF MODULE: ***Diversitat I connexions entre àrees curriculars I entorn***			
(Diversity and connections between curricular areas and the environment)			
BLOCK 4: Introducing ELT within an integrated early years approach			
3	Contextualizing English learning activities within the preschool day	When?	
4	Incorporating English learning activities into existing projects/teaching units	What?	4.3 (design of English language learning activities to include in group project...)
5	Selecting learning activities at preschool (addressing *all* educational needs)	How?	4.3 (...following same format as previous blocks)
Break for 2-week school placement/Development of group projects			
6	Oral presentation of teaching proposals + Peer Assessment Activity		4.2 Peer feedback activity (observing & completing a rubric highlighting strengths, potential difficulties, etc. of other groups' proposals)
7	Peer feedback on proposals. Review of Block + Resolution of doubts/guidance on final tasks.		4.2 Peer feedback actitivy (giving and receiving feedback on proposals) Writing a summary/reflection on feedback received & modifications to proposals for portfolios

[a] Driving questions help structure the content and maintain the focus of each session

It is only after having reflected on these questions and demonstrated their awareness of critical issues through further reading and related activities (including a specific portfolio task) that student teachers are asked to consider the *what* and the *how*. Their growing awareness of the issues discussed helps them to understand that the question of *what* to teach cannot be resolved by searching through curricular documents, but must be defined and designed by the teachers themselves according to their specific educational context and the children they are working with. Following this principle, student teachers are asked to contemplate these questions in relation to their own specific contexts. In other words, they are asked to develop proposals to introduce English learning activities in appropriate and meaningful ways within the teaching units they have been designing (in L1) since the beginning of the module. While class sessions provide general guidance on appropriate activities, focusing on the use of songs, play, daily routines, and so on, student teachers are required to select and design activities that blend in smoothly and logically with their existing plans: At this stage of the module group projects are well developed and student teachers have already designed learning activities (in L1) related to specific topics. Above all, the objective is to encourage student teachers to design proposals that promote authentic learning experiences, drawing on the children’s existing knowledge and experiences. The examples provided in Table 11.4 show the kinds of ideas that student teachers develop within this framework.

Table 11.4 Results of student teachers’ assignments: proposals for introducing ELT in pre-existing projects in the early years

Incorporating English in pre-existing teaching projects in preschool	
Topic/Title of Teaching Unit (TU)	**Methodology/strategy used to introduce English**
La Tardor (*Autumn*) L1 & L2 coexist/interact	A puppet called Adam (dressed in Autumnal clothes) is introduced to the group. He’s an expert on everything related to Autumn and has come to help. He appears when the children are carrying out activities related to the TU and encourages them to communicate with him, e.g., Adam: “What’s that?” Child: “*Es una* leaf” (“It’s a leaf”).
El Supermercat (*The supermarket*) Real life context	A new object is introduced to the group: a decorated supermarket trolley called “Troy the trolley” (decorated with English words & symbols). A sequence of controlled activities are designed to interact with the trolley; putting things in, removing items, accompanied by oral productions, e.g. Teacher: ‘Anna, can you take out the apple?’
La Família (*Family*) Real life context + family-school relations	Some children come from English-speaking families. Parents/other relatives are invited to come into class to talk about their family, using language already studied in L1 & L2 (e.g., names of family members) & illustrating with photos.
La Granja (*The Farm*) Purpose driven	A farmer (volunteer or other teacher in disguise) comes into class and explains his/her dilemma: he/she wants to buy land from an English company but doesn’t speak English. The farmer asks the children to help. Over the next few weeks they spend different moments creating a plan for a farm (essential parts, typical animals, etc.) in English. Once completed, they present their ideas to the farmer, teaching him/her some essential words.
Els Esports (Sports) Language awareness	The children are learning about sports played at the Olympics. They watch a short video clip from the Olympic Games (in English). Teacher asks if they know which language is being used. Discussions follow about the use of English as an international language. The activities developed throughout the TU make reference to this international context, role-playing different scenarios related to the Olympic Games.

Before submitting their written proposals and detailed lesson plans, student teachers are given the opportunity to share their proposals with their peers and to participate in an interactive peer feedback session. Student teachers report positively on this aspect of the block since it helps them identify weaknesses and develop their own projects, while also giving them the opportunity to see the wide range of proposals designed by their peers. This practice reinforces the importance of collaborative work and the benefits of working as part of a team, as student teachers testify in the written reflections submitted within their portfolios.

Transformative Potential

The final reflections written by student teachers highlight the transformative capacity of the training programme, particularly with regard to two of the key aspects discussed throughout this chapter. First, regarding approaches to teaching, student teachers with lower levels of linguistic competence (in English) report considerable changes in attitudes and beliefs, noting that their previous idea that teaching English was ‘not their concern or their responsibility’ has been replaced by a recognition that all early years educators must contribute to this task. They often report that the block has inspired them ‘to go back to English’, to improve their own level ‘to be able to help their future learners’, and ‘to become more “all-round” teachers’. Similarly, student teachers aspiring to be specialist teachers also recognize the need to work in collaboration with the generalist teacher and question their previous belief that ELT is the exclusive domain of the language teacher. This suggests that the format and focus of this training programme can help bring about changes in teacher beliefs and attitudes to language learning/teaching (Ellis, 2019) and contribute to developing whole teacher approaches which acknowledge and embrace the need for ongoing development/learning in multiple domains (Chen & Chang, 2006). Second, regarding approaches to language learning, many student teachers point out that their vision of how children should be taught English has changed considerably as a result of the block, with their attention shifting from ‘which resources will work best’ to a recognition of the need to consider the whole child and to embed learning activities within an integrated approach which recognizes the child’s prior knowledge, experience, and agency.

4 Conclusion

This chapter contributes to previous work (Ellis, 2019; Mourão & Lourenço, 2015; Murphy & Evangelou, 2016; Waddington et al., 2018) emphasizing the need for strategic training programmes to help develop professionals equipped with the skills and pedagogical knowledge needed to support appropriate and effective early language learning in early childhood settings. The example provided stresses the need to include such training in teacher education programmes for *all* teachers, not only those enrolled on specialist language teaching modules or study plans. Implementing such a strategy is by no means straightforward and will depend on the collaboration and support of colleagues outside the specific area of language education. For this reason, considerable work is needed to raise awareness of the guiding principles of whole child and whole teacher approaches to language learning and teaching in the early years. On these lines, researchers could pay particular attention to current practice and to current perspectives among both student teachers and in-service teachers. An analysis of current university training programmes and policies would also help shed light on current practice and reveal the extent to which these programmes are in line with current research and recommendations. Finally, and as discussed above in relation to recent work in this area (Cortina-Pérez & Andúgar Soto, 2018), contributions in other languages will play a key role in raising awareness and widening access to these issues among the global community of pre-primary educators.

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12. Educating Early Years and Primary English Language Teachers Multilingually

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Keywords Teacher education – Multilingually – Subjective – Critical – Creative

1 Introduction

Language is a fundamental constituent of a teacher’s craft, and for teachers of English, the English language is their specialisation and their professional identity. However, in the increasingly mobile and interconnected world of the twenty-first century, the plurality of languages has complexified our artificially construed monolingual classrooms. Many schools have a multilingual profile as they accommodate children with different languages from the language of schooling, some may have more than one language as the language of instruction, and most include an array of languages as foreign or second language subjects. This influx of linguistic and cultural diversity into today’s schools creates an eclectic multilingual class profile that permeates the English language classroom. Until recently, these languages remained silent, invisible and unwelcome in the learning process as a result of monolingualising ideologies (Heller, 1995; Ibrahim, 2022a). Yet, the call for a ‘multilingual turn’ (May, 2014) in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), supported by the growing interest in multilingualism in research and in practice in multiple learning contexts, has altered the linguistic terrain in which early years and primary English teachers operate. In order to create more language-conscious and multilingualism-friendly English-language classrooms, there remains a need to reconceptualise teacher education.

This chapter explores a holistic, subjective and experiential approach to educating English language teachers multilingually. The focus will be on English language teaching (ELT), more specifically, in non-anglophone contexts where English has the status of a foreign or additional language, and is relevant for teachers working with children aged 3–12 years. The first part of the chapter analyses the growing interest in integrating a multilingual perspective in education, yet an overview of the latest research on multilingualism in ELT indicates that it is still at an embryonic stage. This is evidenced in the studies focusing on teachers' perceptions of their knowledge of, and skills in using plurilingual practices, which spotlights the failure to take into consideration teachers' lack of expertise to operationalise a more flexible, multilingual perspective in their English classrooms.

The second half of the chapter explores the practical implications of educating pre-service and in-service teachers multilingually, encompassing a four-step approach to *engage* them with multilingualism: it starts with exploring *lived, subjective* engagement with own multilingualism; encourages *experiential, pedagogical* engagement with plurilingual practices; includes *reflective, critical* engagement with linguistic diversity in ELT; and is underpinned by *creative* engagement with visual approaches and methods. The potential of this approach to amplify teachers' roles in the ELT classroom is exemplified with teacher-created visual artefacts, in conjunction with teachers' reflections, developed as part of the author's teacher education programmes.

2 Current Issues and Research

A Growing, Yet Reluctant Interest in Integrating Multilingualism in ELT

Monolingualising Ideologies

Despite pockets of linguistic diversity seeping into educational policy (Council of Europe, 2018), research (García & Kleyn, 2021) and practice (Lau & Van Viegen, 2020), ELT is still hampered by a monolingual mindset, deeply rooted in historical processes and ideological positionings that have influenced SLA research and language learning methodologies

(Ortega, 2014). These ideologies include viewing multilingualism through the monolingual lens, thus positioning learners' rich linguistic repertoires as problems or defective language skills vis à vis the idealised native-speaker model. They set the learning of English against children's other languages and assume a chronological acquisition of languages, which dismisses the 'dynamic and simultaneous multiplicity' (Ibrahim, 2020) factor in language use and language learning. Language learning methodologies, such as, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), have contributed to the monolingual bias, as they exclude the use of any other language in the teaching of English.

Notwithstanding the good intentions of the English-only approach, that is, maximising opportunities for interacting in the language in low-exposure classroom contexts, it has fueled the ideological premise of monolingualism as the norm. This standpoint has created terms and concepts, such as, negative transfer and language interference while ignoring research findings on the interdependence of languages and the fluidity of communication in multilingual contexts. This monolingual ideology denies children an important cognitive tool for mediating language learning, reinforces linguistic discrimination and has encouraged decades of linguistic bullying, all of which is detrimental for children's social, academic and emotional wellbeing.

Use of the L1

An initial stage in integrating more linguistic diversity in ELT was the call for a judicious and strategic use of the 'L1' in specific classroom situations; for example, building rapport and comforting a child, creating a safe and enjoyable language learning environment, explaining difficult concepts and grammatical structures, and conducting review sessions. Even though this controlled, teacher-centered approach offers practitioners an initial experience with different languages while reassuring them of the central place of English in the English classroom, it only allows a smidgen of linguistic diversity through the backdoor and remains limited to a very utilitarian function. These clearly defined and well-intentioned 'L1' strategies pander to the monolingual ideal, by relegating one language, the hypothetical 'L1', to the function of a crutch or prop, a 'one-off scaffolding technique or a tolerated approach' (Ibrahim, 2019, p. 27).

The Fallacy of the Overuse of the L1

On the opposite end of the continuum there is concern that the overuse of the 'L1', or the language of schooling, in mainstream ELT reduces children's exposure to English and impedes effective, quality language learning. The *ELLiE* project (Enever, 2011), a large-scale study of early language learning across seven European countries, suggests that the L1 was very much present in the classroom and that target language use only was the exception. Reasons for this range from teachers' low level of proficiency in English and the facilitative function of the L1 shared by the teacher and the majority of learners to communicate difficult concepts.

Other studies show children's positive attitudes towards the L1 in English classrooms; for example, Thai learners preferred to be taught by a teacher who could switch between Thai and English (Imray, 2016).Some studies highlight language gains in English; for example, a bilingual Japanese–English teacher, drawing on children's L1, enabled her six- to seven-year-old learners to produce more extended sentences in English than her counterpart using an English-only approach (Copland & Yonetsugi, 2016). A study investigating preschool children's experiences and perceptions of English language learning by using a metaphor elicitation technique (Ellis & Ibrahim, 2021) 'highlights the benefits of allowing children to use their full linguistic repertoires when expressing their perceptions and experiences of learning another language. This inclusive practice provides richer data and valorises and empowers children's voices' (p. 9). Even though these types of studies are still scarce, they highlight an important gap in the literature and in teacher education, and pose the question of how to maximise the use of the L1, and other languages, in the English classroom.

Children's Full Linguistic Repertoire

Concrete actions are needed to acknowledge children's languages as important steps towards developing proficiency in English, as it is impossible for a teacher to successfully banish the learner's own language from the foreign language learning experience. Children do not come to their English classes as empty linguistic vessels, but as functioning, competent language and/or multilingual users. As Kerr (2014) suggests, learning 'is built upon previous learning, and the most significant resource that learners can bring to the language learning task is their existing linguistic knowledge – a substantial portion of which consists of knowledge about their own language' (p. 14). Rather than assuming that children are '*tabula rasa* by teaching with a monolingual approach', Galante (2020) suggests we 'harness language learners' entire linguistic repertoire to develop English and support students' agency as plurilingual learners' (p. 240). Moving towards a pedagogy that recognises children as linguistically complex and multilayered individuals, these languages are then 'viewed as a place from which to build upon and make connections and comparisons' (García & Kleyn, 2021, p. 69). They are respected as an acknowledgement of children's plurilingual identity, as a contribution to their socio-emotional well-being and as recognition of children's agency in choosing how they prefer to learn a new language. Learners are positioned as competent emergent multilinguals as opposed to deficient English language learners; hence, ELT cannot exclude the child's full linguistic repertoire.

Teachers at the Crossroads

Teaching the standard grammatical, phonological, and lexical system of a single named language, such as English, needs to include the acquisition of multilingual and multicultural competencies. This calls into question the English-only approach and presents teachers with a series of linguistic choices, that is, English-only or using the L1, how much L1, the language of schooling versus including children's full linguistic repertoires. These choices constitute a series of challenges, in terms of their attitudes and ideologies, their classroom practice and their professional development.

Attitudes and Ideological Challenges

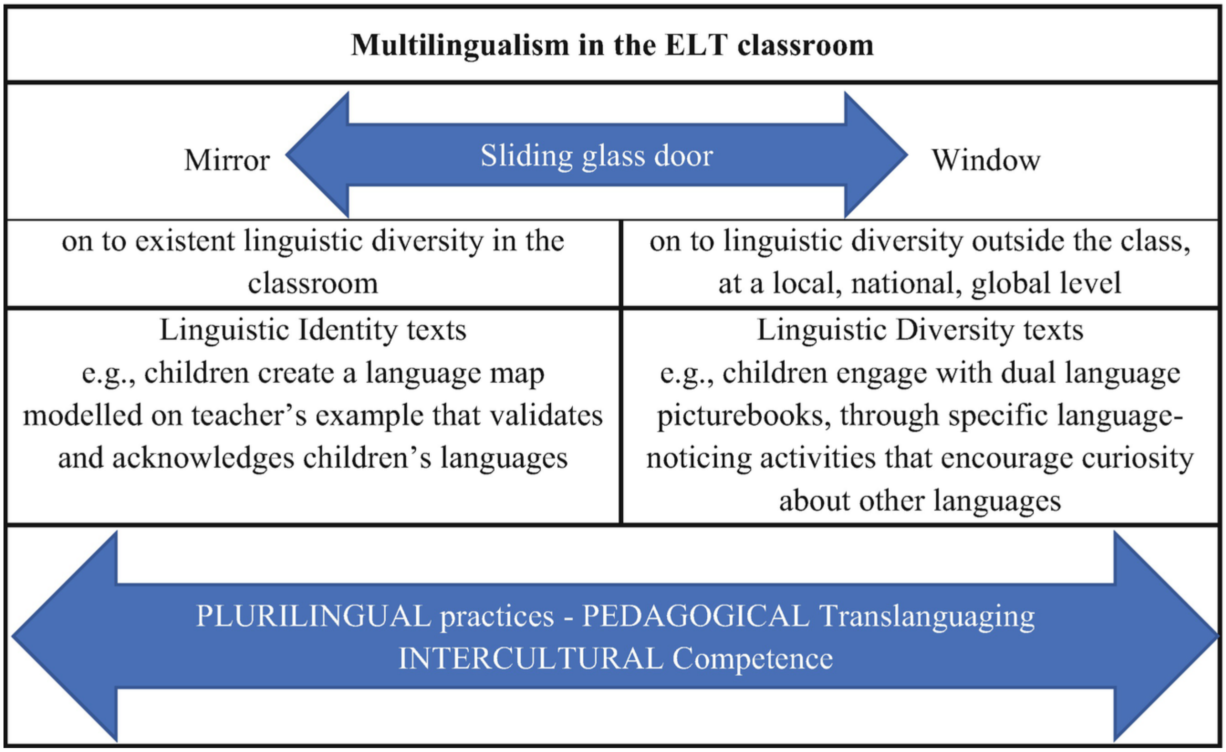
Even though attitudes, ideologies and language pedagogy are starting to reflect a multilingual reality, it remains a struggle to penetrate the English classroom effectively. On the one hand, there are teachers attempting to increase linguistic diversity in their classrooms, as is evidenced by Lau and Van Viegen (2020), who highlight the 'privilege of working alongside teachers who have found and developed critical and creative strategies for bringing students' linguistic repertoires into the learning context' (p. 4). Conversely, transitioning to an effective translanguaging or plurilingual practice is challenging for teachers due to ideological barriers that maintain the status quo.

A growing body of research into teacher perceptions of, and beliefs about multilingualism is shedding light on the discrepancies between teachers' general positive attitudes towards multilingualism and the lack of observed plurilingual practices (De Angelis, 2011; Haukås, 2016). Actively engaging with plurilingual practices in the English classroom has been hindered by misconceptions about the acquisition and learning of multiple languages. Some common misconceptions include the need to know all the children's languages and the belief that the home languages interfere with the learning of the language of schooling or the majority language. Furthermore, teachers perceive the mixing of languages as problematic. They also believe that only advanced language learners benefit from cross-linguistic comparisons, and have metalinguistic knowledge. These studies expose the lack of awareness of second, and third language acquisition research, and even after plurilingual interventions, some teachers still express a great deal of insecurity and hesitation (Lorenz et al., 2021). These studies are important as teacher beliefs and perceptions impact on what happens in the classroom and strongly influence pedagogical decisions and communication beyond the school. For example, De Angelis's study (2011) highlights the key role that beliefs play in teaching practice and in communicating with parents about their children's multilingualism. Even though teachers showed little awareness of the benefits of bilingualism or the usefulness of integrating other languages into classroom practice, they were very willing to offer language advice to the parents. If the classroom represents a key site where policy becomes action then teachers, 'through their pedagogical decisions based on their beliefs, are at the metaphorical heart of language policy implementation' (Lundberg, 2019, p. 267).

Teachers have been bombarded with communication about the benefits of multilingualism in the form of research publications, blogs and conference papers. The numerous references to children's linguistic rights, multilingual identities and socio-emotional well-being, albeit necessary and laudable, are excluding the teacher's multiple identities and professional well-being. This chapter claims that just as children learn better when their language repertoires are used as a learning resource, so teachers teach better when they are encouraged to develop a multilingual ELT teacher identity, which is acknowledged and respected as a resource in the English classroom and accords them the tools to make informed pedagogical decisions.

Pedagogical Challenges

The developments described above impact on teachers' professional practice and sense of self. They have resulted in teachers' routines being destabilised, the skills they learnt in the safety of traditional English language education programmes rendered inadequate, and their professional confidence dented as they are left to navigate a complex linguistic debate without robust support. Teachers need training in balancing effective English language teaching with knowledge of how and when to introduce plurilingual practices, such as translanguaging (Wei, 2020). In order to introduce a more flexible approach, multilingualism in the English language classroom can be placed on a continuum between exploring existent, local and classroom-based languages as well as global, distant and diverse multilingualisms. In order to operationalise this approach, Sims Bishop's (1990) 'mirrors', 'windows' and 'sliding glass doors' metaphor can be applied from children's literature scholarship, which draws attention to the exclusion of underrepresented groups in children's books. This metaphor, expanded to the multilingual English classroom, embraces a continuum of wider or global linguistic diversity (a window) and classroom-based or local multilingual representation (a mirror), mediated by plurilingual practices (see Fig. 12.1). Hence, languages are conceptualised as communicative opportunities across cultures and languages, identities and experiences, knowledges and emotions.


Multilingualism in the ELT classroom

Mirror

Sliding glass door

Window

on to existent linguistic diversity in the classroom

on to linguistic diversity outside the class, at a local, national, global level

Linguistic Identity texts
e.g., children create a language map modelled on teacher's example that validates and acknowledges children's languages

Linguistic Diversity texts
e.g., children engage with dual language picturebooks, through specific language-noticing activities that encourage curiosity about other languages

PLURILINGUAL practices - PEDAGOGICAL Translanguaging
INTERCULTURAL Competence

Fig. 12.1 Multilingualism in the ELT classroom

Plurilingual practices act as the sliding glass door that equips teachers with the skills to make informed decisions about integrating children's identities and flexibly moving between monolingual, English-only as well as bilingual and plurilingual pedagogies. Teachers thus understand why, when and how to integrate other languages in the learning process. Furthermore, they learn to develop children's metalinguistic and multilinguistic awareness so they can have focused and meaningful conversations about languages and language learning, and linguistic and intercultural diversity. These practices, not only give teachers new skills and a deeper understanding of their learners' profiles, but also ensure continuity in children's linguistic biographies, strengthen their multilingual identities, and build a multilingual relationship between the teacher and the children.

Professional Development Challenges

Now that the veil has been lifted on the linguistic realities of English language classrooms, the multilingual turn has far-reaching implications for educating English language teachers for the future. Teacher education is still constrained by a monolingual grip and remains firmly entrenched in the separate subject-specific approaches of the past, exposing a scarcity of concrete guidelines for teacher training with elements of plurilingual pedagogy. According to Haukås (2016), ‘to date, education for language teachers seems to devote an insufficient amount of time to enhancing language teachers’ multilingual awareness and practices’ (p. 13).

Moving beyond this impasse implies concrete actions in teacher education programmes to develop teachers’ knowledge and self-awareness of multilingual identities. For example, the IATEFL Young Learner and Teenagers Special Interest Group included a debate on the use of the L1 during the Showcase Day at the IATEFL Liverpool Conference in 2019, in preparation for a day-long Pre-Conference Event dedicated to Multilingualism in ELT in 2021. This event included a line-up of high-profile speakers in multilingualism research from diverse contexts. Despite these highly relevant and wide-reaching interventions, they remain sporadic and are insufficient to make a lasting change.

Language teacher education plays a key role in empowering future teachers to implement plurilingual pedagogies. The literature indicates clear relationships between multilingual teacher training, exposure to and experience of multilingualism, and monolingual ideologies permeating teacher beliefs, their knowledge, and practice (Haukås, 2016). This demands a context-dependent approach and more practice–theory based dialogue, with teachers who are not only educated multilingually but who come into contact with educators who themselves educate multilingually. Tian (2020) examines how one teacher educator and her student teachers engaged with translanguaging on a TESOL teacher preparation course. He emphasises the important role teacher educators and university professors play in setting an example and actually practising what they preach. Liyanage and Tao (2020) emphasise how teacher educators must take an active role in reforming and restructuring teacher education programmes, so they meet the ‘demands of effective multilingual education and prepare teachers to respond to the circumstances they encounter with ethical, just, and student-focused practices’ (p. 1).

3 Practical Applications

Even though teachers still need subject-specific education in order to develop their specialisations, they also need to develop a more flexible, integrated and interdisciplinary approach to language education. Recent research in teacher education (Lorenz et al., 2021; Ibrahim, 2022b) includes a deeper understanding of societal multilingualism and translingual pedagogical practices as well as engagement with individual plurilingualism.

Educating Teachers Multilingually: A Model of Teacher Engagement

The model this chapter proposes for educating teachers multilingually expands on García and Kleyn's (2021) three-strand approach, which includes the following competencies: knowledge of the children and their families, knowledge of bi/multilingualism and knowledge of appropriate plurilingual pedagogies. Two of these components involve concepts and pedagogies, while the third component pertains to the language learner, yet no mention is made of multilingual teachers and their positioning in the ELT classroom. Developing teachers' knowledge base is fundamental but researchers and teacher educators are also calling for a more personal and subjective approach as key first steps in 'raising the critical awareness amongst teachers and teacher trainers of their own multilingual background, their own learning trajectories and their own attitudes toward plurilingualism and plurilingual practices' (Wei, 2020, p. 274). The vast majority of English language teachers and teacher trainers are bilingual or multilingual, yet neither teaching practice nor teacher education programmes are tapping into this significant reservoir of lived and experiential knowledge of multilingualism. Hence, a truly multilingual learning context positions teachers in a dialogic relationship with their teacher educators, as they co-construct and explore their multilingual identities.

This immersive approach requires personal teacher *engagement* as:

- *lived and subjective*, where teachers engage with their own multilingualism and explore their language use and language trajectories, unpacking representations, ideologies and attitudes;
- *experiential and pedagogical*, where teachers not only attend modules focusing on specific areas, for example, understanding societal and individual multilingualism and language ideologies, but also engage with plurilingual practices integrated into English subject pedagogy;

- *critical and reflective,* where teachers reflect on, and question their own language practices as well as Western-centric approaches to language education and include examples of southern and local multilingualisms (Heugh et al., 2019);
- and is underpinned by *creative visual* approaches for eliciting new representations of multilingualism in ELT.

The first three components of the model (see Fig. 12.2) overlap and intersect, and together impact on teachers' ideologies, beliefs and practices. They are embedded in the visual methods that engage the teachers' reflections on multilingualism, and potentially lead them to reassess their pedagogical practice and adopt a more nuanced approach to using multiple languages in their teaching.

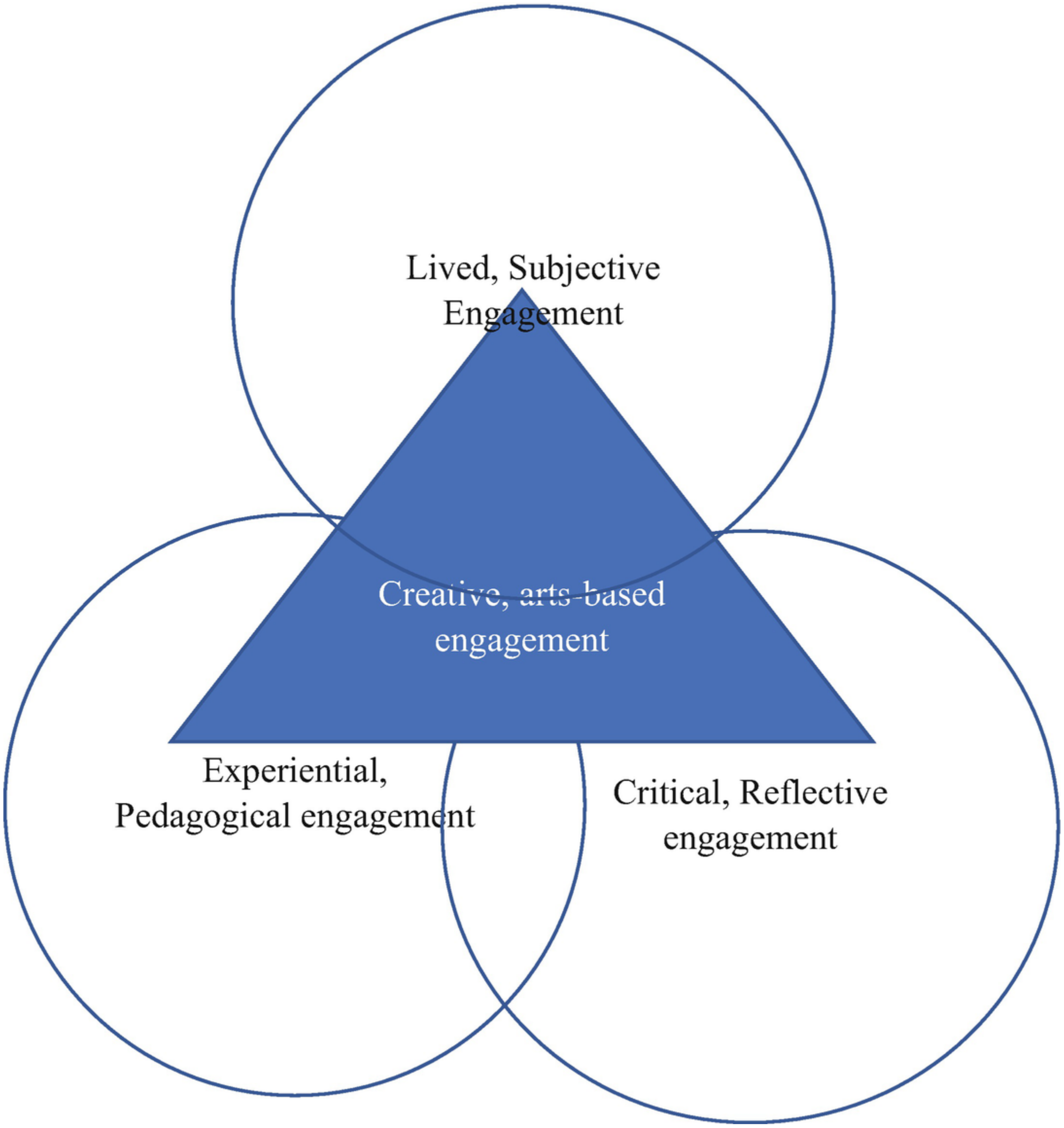

Lived, Subjective Engagement
Creative, arts-based engagement
Experiential, Pedagogical engagement
Critical, Reflective engagement

Fig. 12.2 Components of the model

Creative, Visual Engagement with Multilingualism

Underpinning this model is the current focus on the ‘visual turn’ (Kalaja & Melo-Pfeifer, 2019) in multilingualism research and pedagogy. This ‘biographically oriented research’ (Busch, 2018, p. 49) has been explored in identity-based interventions with learners in various contexts (Hirsu et al., 2021). When used in teacher education, these approaches provide a means to unpack teachers’ language histories and reflections on their language experiences as well as practices.

These multimodal texts go beyond the predominantly verbal focus in language education. They accommodate different semiotic modes that expand teacher’s discursive possibilities and deconstruct monolithic representations of language. Combining verbal data with visual features encourages teachers to reflect on their artistic choices and engage with the complexity of living and teaching multilingually, sometimes presented in polarised, hybridised and/or contradictory ways. Engaging with multilingualism via visualisation techniques positions teachers’ linguistic experiences within personal as well as theoretical perspectives, such as, the interdependence of languages, language mixing, translanguaging and flexible language use.

The following three sections, which exemplify the three interlocking circles of the model, provide concrete examples, captured in cameo boxes, of subjective and creative pedagogy for teacher education from the author’s own practice. These visual methods include language silhouettes (Busch, 2018), language maps (Somerville & D’warte, 2014), and DLC (Dominant Language Constellations) artefacts (Ibrahim, 2020).

Lived, Subjective Engagement with Multilingualism

Personal engagement with multilingualism involves ‘making sense of becoming or being multilingual as subjectively experienced, *involving positive and negative emotions, attitudes, beliefs, visions and identities’* (Kalaja & Melo-Pfeifer, 2019, p. 1). Kramsch (2012) contrasts the objective approach, which focuses on knowledge and mastery of language, to the *subjective approach*, where multilinguals attempt to establish how they themselves feel about becoming or being multilinguals, or what the different languages and their use might mean to them personally. Subjectively engaging with multilingualism includes investing in exploring teachers’ identity in their education programmes, so they, in turn, invest in exploring learners’ identities in the language classroom. Exploring teachers’ multilingualism helps them construct a representation of a shared linguistic space, where languages interact and coexist, exposing hidden teacher identities and rebuilding teachers’ multilingual relationship with themselves and the children in their classes.

Operationalising the multilingual lens in the ELT classroom must first and foremost include the teacher educators, who are willing to expose their multilingual experiences, thus expanding their identity as an English language teacher educator (Cameo Box 12.1).

Cameo Box 12.1 The Multilingual Teacher Educator

The teacher educator reveals, at the beginning of the course, a multilingual biographical journey via an example of a creative identity text, a language silhouette (see Fig. 12.3). This text serves as a springboard for discussion of multilingualism in English language pedagogy and models the process of self-identifying as multilingual. It also decentres the English native-speaker teacher model, thus foregrounding teachers as multilingual individuals.

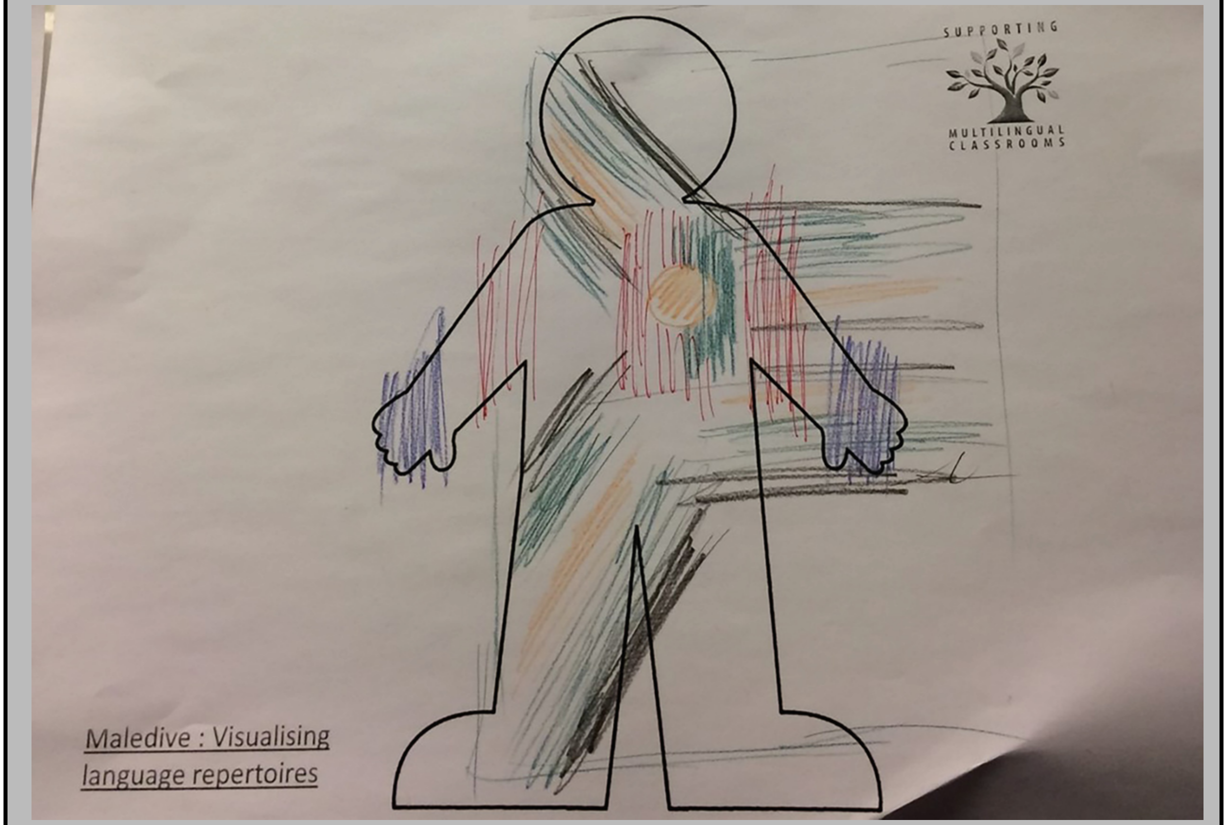
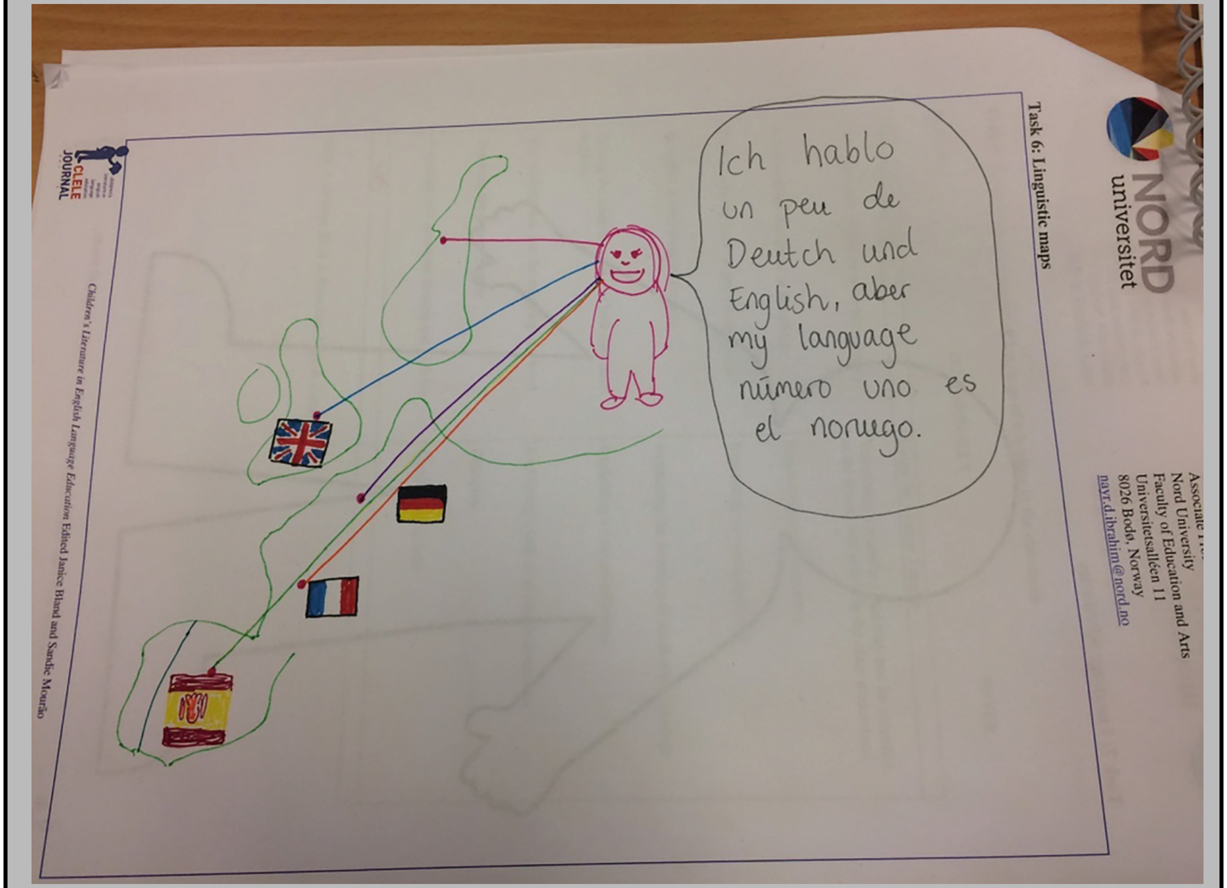

SUPPORTING MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOMS
Maledive : Visualising language repertoires

Fig. 12.3 Visualising language repertoires

Language maps provide 'image-text assemblages that chart particular navigational pathways' (Somerville & D'warte, 2014, p. 4) in an individual's language biography. In the example below (Cameo Box 12.2), language maps constitute teachers' linguistic repertoires. They depict spatial, temporal and relational associations with their languages, and encourage them to consider their full linguistic repertoire.

Cameo Box 12.2 Language Map as a Space to Engage with Full Linguistic Repertoires

This teacher was attending a professional development course, which included a module on multilingualism. One of the tasks was to draw her language map (see Fig. 12.4). At first there was some hesitation to include French, a foreign language learned in school, which the teacher had mostly forgotten and was deemed not worthy of a place in her language repertoire. In the end, the decision to include French expanded her perception of self, which included languages learnt and not used, thus self-ascribing an eclectic, dynamic and shifting multilingual identity. The narrative in the speech bubble represents flexible language use, or spontaneous translanguaging, which characterizes multilingualism as a complex, dynamic, multidimensional phenomenon (Ibrahim, 2022a).


Ich hablo un peu de Deutch und English, aber my language número uno es el noruego.
Task 6: Linguistic maps
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Children's Literature in English Language Education Edited Janice Bland and Sandie Mourão
Nord University
Faculty of Education and Arts
Universitetsalléen 11
8026 Bodø, Norway
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Fig. 12.4 Language maps

Creating DLC artefacts (Ibrahim, 2022b) is another visual and artefactual approach that can be used to engage teachers' multilingual identities. It is based on the Dominant Language Constellations (DLCs) concept (Aronin, 2019, p. 240), which 'denotes the group of a person's most expedient languages, functioning as an entire unit and enabling an individual to meet all his/her needs in a multilingual environment'. In a pedagogical and innovative application of DLC research, the creation of personalised DLC artefacts engage the teachers' full and complex repertoires of languages, linguistic competences and identities (Cameo Box 12.3).

Cameo Box 12.3 DLC Artefact in the Form of an Atom

The DLC artefact in Fig. 12.5 was created at the outset of a pre-service course on English subject pedagogy. Its design, in the form of an atom, reflects the teacher's appreciation of science, but also offers them a metaphor to explain the positioning of, and relationship with the different languages (Norwegian as the core, the mother tongue; English in the inner shell as a language she knows very well; and the next three languages in the outer shell, Swedish, Danish and Dutch, with varying proficiencies in different domains). The teacher's reflection on the creation of the DLC highlights the awareness-raising influence of this method of engaging teachers with their multilingualism and the impact this may have on their future classroom practice.

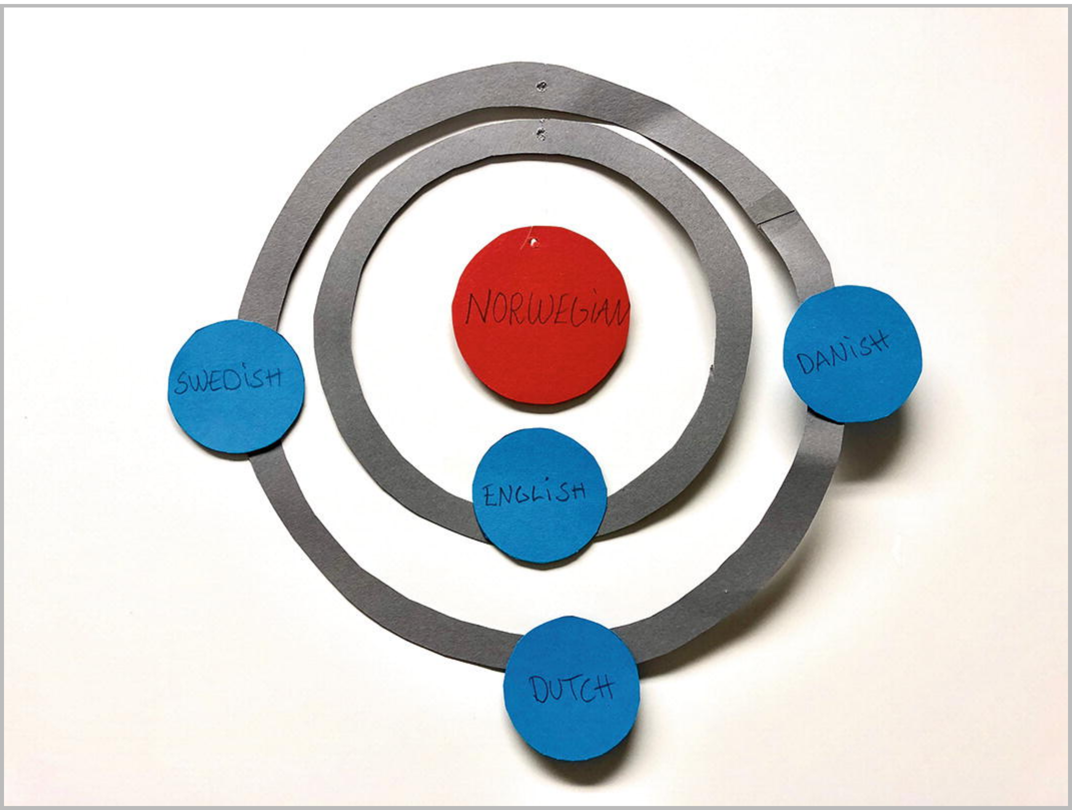


Fig. 12.5 DLC artefact in the form of an atom

> *By creating this atom to visualise my language repertoire I realised I know more than I thought I did. I was not aware that I knew 5 languages. It also made me realize that we are constantly learning new words and meanings in different languages without realizing it. A lot of the languages are similar in some ways and that is something to keep in mind when I become a teacher. Students shouldn't suppress the languages they know and only use one single language. By speaking, reading and listening we create diversity which is so important for the learning environment and learning from each other*. (Ibrahim, 2022a, b p.15)

Pedagogical Engagement with Plurilingual Practices

Pedagogical engagement requires teachers to develop a sound basis in child language development, multilingual language acquisition and relevant developmentally appropriate practices. Besides, experiencing plurilingual practices in their teacher education courses heightens teachers’ awareness of opportunities for introducing other languages in the English classroom (Cameo Box 12.4).

Cameo Box 12.4 Integrating Plurilingual Practices via Picturebooks

A session on demonstrating pre-teaching of vocabulary in a first-year pre-service teachers’ course included the picturebook *Meg and Mog* (Nicoll & Pieńkowski, 2004). The focus on English lexical sets was expanded to exploring vocabulary equivalents in the languages of the student teachers: the language of schooling (Norwegian), teachers’ foreign languages (French, Spanish) and one teacher’s L1 (Latvian) (see Fig. 12.6). The novelty of the Latvian language in the classroom was an opportunity to initiate discussions around the pronunciation of Latvian sounds, grapho-phonemic connections and spelling conventions. This enabled the group to recycle the language introduced in a Teaching Pronunciation session, and included further metalinguistic reflections.

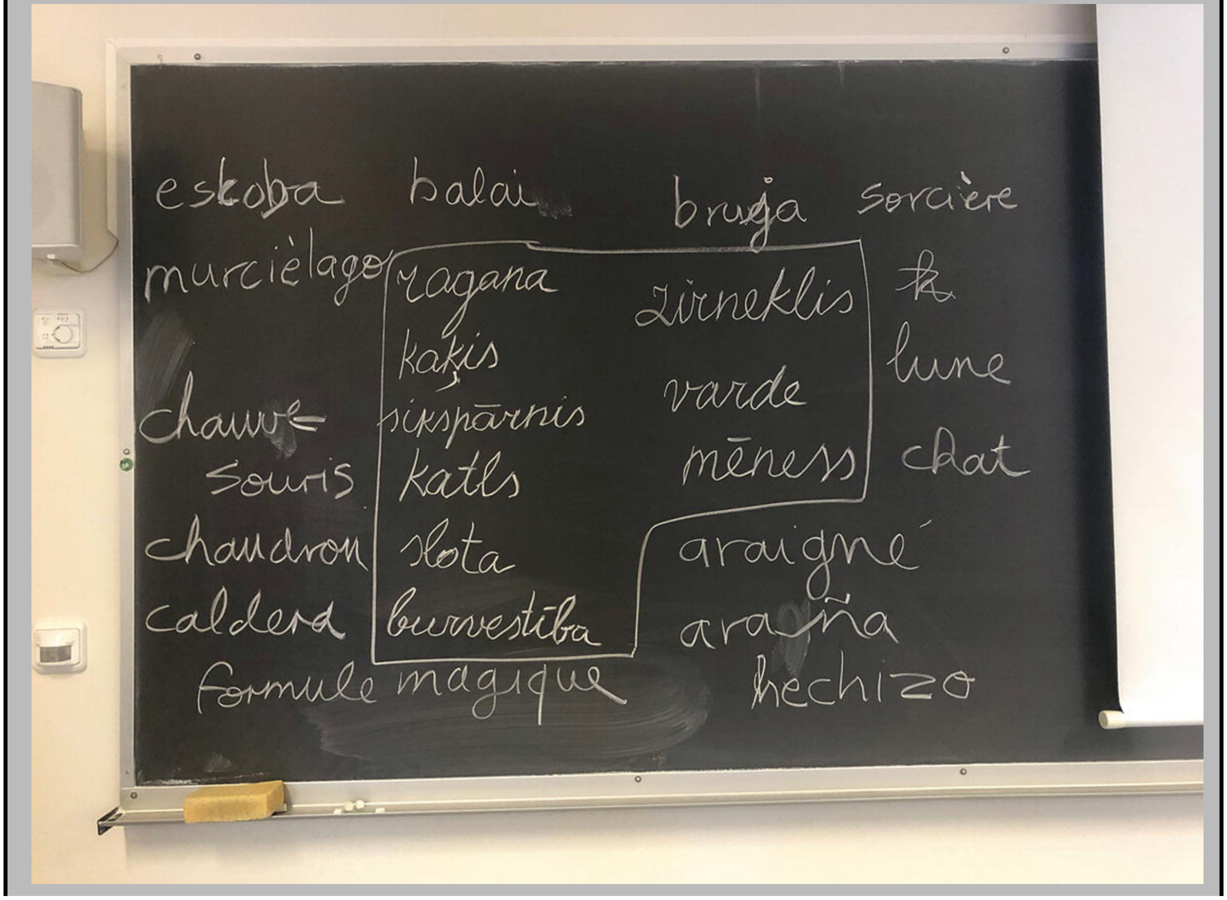

eskoba
balai
bruja
sorcière
murciélago
raganа
zirneklis
lune
kaķis
varde
chauve souris
sikspārnis
mēness
chat
katls
slota
araigné
chaudron
caldera
burvestība
araña
formule magique
hechizo

Fig. 12.6 Exploring lexical equivalents in student teachers' languages

Critical Engagement with Multilingualism

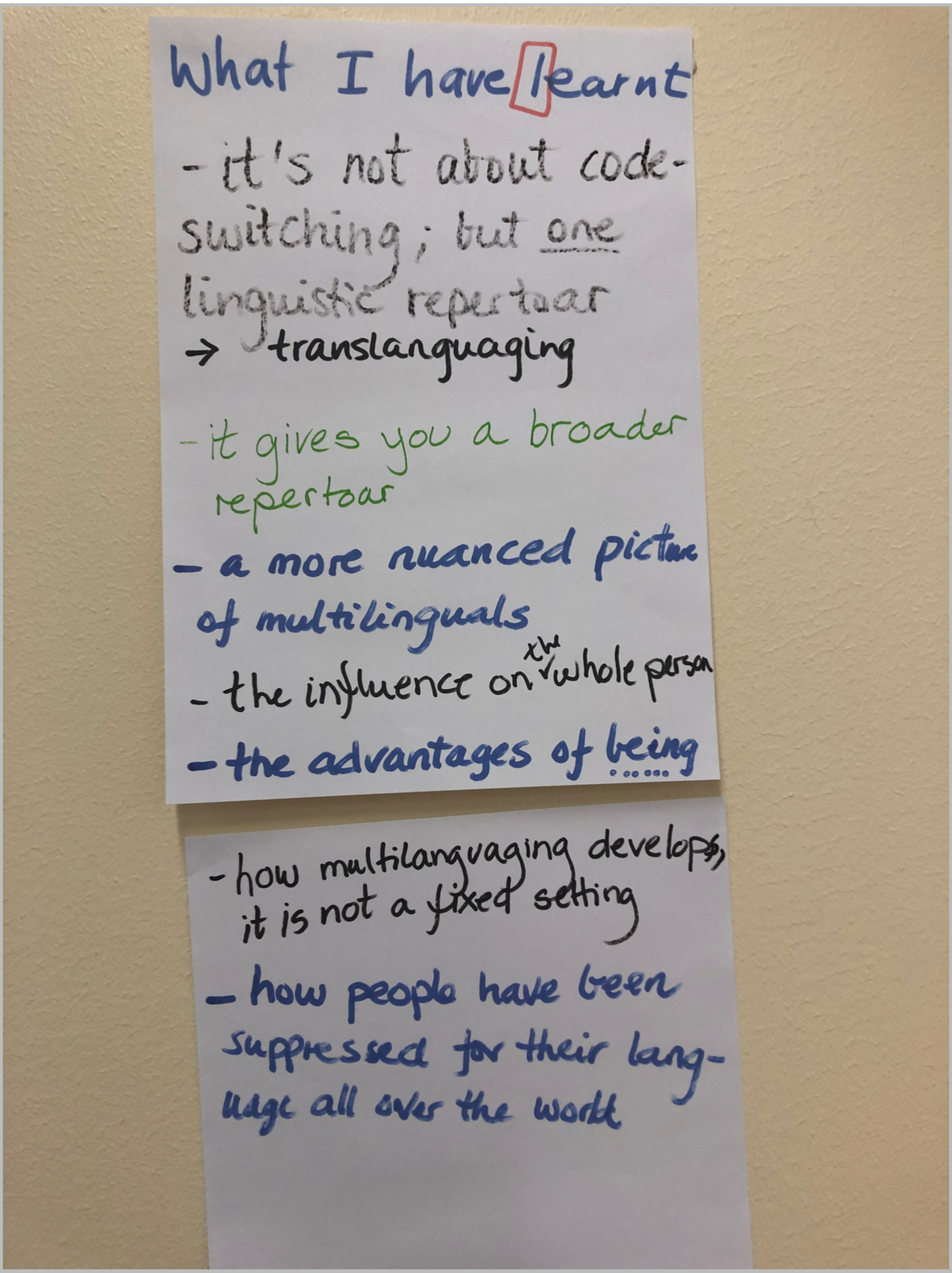
Personal engagement with multilingualism implies a critical dimension (Kramsch, 2012). Galante (2020, p. 240) uses the term *conscientização* in TESOL, introduced by the Brazilian educator and activist Freire (2011), to capture the need for individuals 'to be aware of their actions in relation to social and historical contexts, political structures and power relations' (p. 40), as language is never neutral. When English language teachers approach multilingualism from a critical perspective, they not only make informed decisions related to *if, when* and *how* to implement plurilingual practices but also explore their evolving beliefs and positioning vis-à-vis old and new language teaching ideologies. Hence, engaging critically with multilingualism requires teachers to question the political and ideological premise of its exclusion, while simultaneously critically analysing the blanket calls for multilingualism everywhere. Teacher education must provide teachers with a sense of agency so they know when to switch from monolingual to bilingual to multilingual mode (Breivik et al., 2020) and avoid a 'celebrationist multilingual ideology' (Berthele, 2021), that uncritically foregrounds multilingualism as the only way to be and excludes monolingualism, as part of flexible language use.

Teacher education needs to counter contradictory and divisive discourse (Ibrahim, 2022a) and avoid false dichotomies, which force teachers to choose between essentialist binary extremes; for example, the English-only approach versus including all of the children's languages. Besides, the tug-of-war between the English-only and the too-much-L1 debate is a false, discriminatory dichotomy. It fails to engage with children's real and complex linguistic repertoires and evades teachers' need for understanding linguistic diversity from a personal and professional dimension. This highlights the pressing need to problematise both the term and concept of the 'L1'. It is reductionist as it focuses on one hypothetical 'L1', equates the L1 to the language of schooling, and denies children their multilingual identity.

The impact of a module on multilingualism in expanding the teachers' perceptions of linguistic diversity is evident in the teachers' feedback in Cameo Box 12.5.

Cameo Box 12.5 Feedback on a Module on Multilingualism

Feedback from teachers on an in-service course (see Fig. 12.7), collected after a series of lessons on multilingualism, reveals a more complex and nuanced perspective on the phenomenon, thus breaking down unhelpful opposite extremes and starting the deconstruction of monolingualising processes and ideologies.



What I have learnt

- it's not about code-switching; but one linguistic repertoar
→ translanguaging

- it gives you a broader repertoar

- a more nuanced picture of multilinguals

- the influence on the whole person

- the advantages of being ……

- how multilanguaging develops, it is not a fixed setting

- how people have been suppressed for their language all over the world

Fig. 12.7 Feedback from in-service teachers

Critical engagement with multilingualism requires an acknowledgement of the overpowering influence of the English language so as to expand its remit to decolonise (Ndhlovu & Makalela, 2021) and demonolingualise (Ibrahim, 2022a) the learning space. English as a dominant world language and as a colonising language has a moral responsibility to shine a spotlight on the linguistic diversity of the context it inhabits. Reflecting on and questioning Western-centric approaches to language teacher education and including examples of southern, local and indigenous multilingualisms recalibrates the relations of power that endures in English language teaching. A pedagogical resource that expands the remit of the English classroom is authentic multilingual children's literature. Ibrahim and Prilutskaya (2021) explore a trilingual approach via multilingual picturebooks (Cameo Box 12.6), with a particular focus on local, indigenous languages; this approach provides teachers with a ready-made resource that offers more socially just, diversity-focused and language-conscious approaches in ELT.

Cameo Box 12.6 Dual-Language Picturebooks as Multilingual Resources in the ELT Classroom

As a response to the call for integrating a Sami focus across all subjects in an MA in Primary Teacher Education in Northern Norway, a scheme of work was developed around the dual-language Norwegian/North Sami picturebook, *Ábiid plástihkat – Plasten i havet* by Rita Sørly and Malgorzata Piotrowska (illustrator). Besides the themes of intercultural awareness and indigenous and environmental issues, this multilingual resource engages teachers in plurilingual practices: intercomprehension, experimenting with translanguaging approaches, developing metalinguistic skills, practising noticing strategies, identifying transparent words/cognates, guessing the morphosyntactic structure of North Sami by comparing sentences to Norwegian and English, and hearing North Sami sounds with the help of technology. The website, Acapela Group (https://www.acapela-group.com/), includes a text-to-speech feature to hear North Sámi sounds, intonation and the melody of the language. Student teachers' reflective feedback on the trilingual experience in the English classroom reveals a deeper understanding of the potential benefits of more linguistic diversity in the English classroom:

Using dual-language picturebooks links to the Norwegian core curriculum. Not only for language learning, but for social learning, creating awareness and acceptance.

Being able to see similarities between languages could be helpful to learn and understand a foreign language. It brings diversity to the classroom.

You can learn English for a reason. To learn about other cultures.

Using children's literature that has representation can be a great way for children to learn how other people live and feel.

It made me realize that every aspect of an English lesson does not have to be in English.

I did not think that you could use a Norwegian book in English. It was an instructive experience.

Bringing It All Together: Implications for the Future of Teacher Education

The refocusing of teacher education on engaging teachers with multilingualism at a personal as well as a pedagogical and a critical level initiates a reflective process. This aims to alter teachers' professional self-image and enhance their pedagogical empowerment in dealing with the challenges such a change involves. The implications of this model for educating teachers multilingually highlight the following tentative guidelines for future early years and primary English language teacher education:

- include practices that implicate teachers' reassessment of themselves as multilingual individuals;
- encourage teacher educators to create a safe multilingual learning space where teachers experiment with, and critically analyse plurilingual practices in ELT;
- explore the potential of visual and artefactual methods as a creative pathway to exploring linguistic diversity;
- integrate multilingual, multicultural picturebooks with an intercultural and global focus to expand the remit of English as an inclusive world language.

4 Conclusion

Educating teachers multilingually can provide ELT with a transformative, prismatic and catalytic revolution. It expands the roles of teachers by making space for their full linguistic identities, and has repercussions beyond the classroom, creating home-school connections and inclusive communities based on respect, socio-emotional well-being and justice. As teachers learn to manage the plurilingual repertoires and identities of the children in their classrooms effectively and sensitively, they are better equipped to position children as competent and confident, as opposed to dependent, silent language learners, and teachers as knowledgeable agents of change. Even if change does not occur immediately, as it requires long-term, sustained training to make alterations to teachers' belief systems possible, a reorientation of teacher pedagogy from a personal perspective, initiates the process of reflection and enquiry into the foundations of their practice and of revaluating the hegemony of the monolingual English-only approach.

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13. Scaffolding In-depth Learning: Picturebooks for Intercultural Citizenship in Primary English Teacher Education

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1 Introduction

At the time of writing, the ongoing war in Ukraine has exacerbated the global refugee crisis, and in a marked departure from the apolitical tendency within English language teaching (see, e.g., Fang & Elyas, 2021), empirical studies indicate that some primary teachers have started to transcend a narrow linguistic syllabus and to focus on themes related to intercultural citizenship education (see, e.g., Porto and Di Bin (2022) on environmental activism in Argentina, and Potestades (2021) on diverse gender identities in the Philippines). Classroom practitioners may thus be seeking ways and means to explore intercultural experiences and other issues of global significance—framed in this chapter as *in-depth learning*. According to Bland (2022), this manifests when children ‘become invested in their learning as they recognize its immediate relevance for their lives in the real world. In this way, in-depth learning seeks to involve students as agentive and ambitious participants in their own learning’ (p. 18).

Nevertheless, when teachers attempt to scaffold in-depth learning in the English classroom context, they enounter challenges, including the use of materials and pedagogies suitable for children (circa six to ten years old) learning English as another language. The situation has partly arisen due to avoidance of emotionally charged, real-world issues such as armed conflict in published English language teaching materials and coursebooks in particular (see, e.g., Ibrahim, 2022; McConachy, 2018) with their strongly instrumental focus on linguistic systems. Some scholars in primary English language teaching (PELT) have addressed this gap by reimagining pedagogical repertoires with picturebooks (Ellis & Gruenbaum, this volume) to create more hospitable spaces for interculturality through an in-depth learning approach.

The picturebook format comprises an interanimation of visual and verbal aspects as well as imaginative spaces in between. Its aesthetic potential for education is captured by Sipe (2008) who claims that 'literally from cover to cover, the picturebook is an art object, an aesthetic whole; each one of its parts contributes to the total effect' (p. 16). Yet, these aesthetic potentialities have been underexplored in PELT contexts (Mourão, 2016), reflected in the following anecdote recently shared by a teacher educator. The colleague in question visited a primary school to observe an English language lesson based on a picturebook depicting a refugee experience, where the protagonist is forced to leave their country. The teacher was an experienced practitioner who aimed to provide their group of nine- and ten-year-old learners with an age-accessible focus on forced migration. To help the children to make personalised, text-to-life connections (Rosenblatt, 1993), following a read-aloud, the teacher asked the learners to discuss which items they would take if they had to leave their homes in a similar way to the protagonist. One child, who had been disengaged throughout the read-aloud, responded in English with *'a bottle of vodka.'* Visibly taken aback by this unexpected response, the teacher attempted to mediate it as teachable moment, through the child's own language to clarify the meaning of 'forced migration' and encourage them to again imagine they had no choice about rapidly leaving, and to reconsider what they would take. '*OK, then…,*' the child continued in English, *'a pair of dirty socks'*.

If the lesson and the picturebook had not been related to a lived experience, with connections to the conflict in Ukraine, teachers may be impressed by the child's divergent response in English. As García-González et al. (2019) indicate that 'hacking' talk around a picturebook can be regarded as 'boycotting adult expectations of how the conversation about the books should be driven' (p. 9); and such hacking can function to valorise the child's voice in PELT (Ellis & Ibrahim, 2021). Nevertheless, the lesson observation anecdote acts as a cautionary tale for classroom practice and teacher education alike. This is because while empathy may be regarded as integral to intercultural awareness (see, e.g., Habegger-Conti, 2021; Matos & Melo-Pfeifer, 2020), there are barriers for learners to empathise with picturebook characters whose experiences are far removed from children's own daily realities (Farrar et al., 2022; Short, 2019). The likelihood of such empathetic disconnect is heightened when children lack the linguistic resources to communicate their thoughts and feelings in the newer language. Therefore, despite laudable intentions in certain PELT contexts, personalised speaking activities of the *'What would you take?'* type are rendered to lexical label quests (Becker & Roos, 2016).

In this chapter, the argument that children's empathy with picturebook characters and their experiences *can* be ignited while developing intercultural citizenship (ICit) is posited. Yet, this is accompanied by a proviso that to manifest in the PELT classroom, in-service teacher education about in-depth learning is necessary. This is to envelop teachers 'literally cover to cover'—using Sipe's (2008) words—in picturebooks for ICit with experiential, dialogic and collaborative approaches (Hofmann et al., 2021). In order to explore those aspects involved in such 'enveloping', three domains of PELT practices will be considered: picturebooks with English language learners (Ellis & Mourão, 2021), children's deep reading of compelling narratives (Matos & Melo-Pfeifer, 2020) and finally, children's in-depth learning—manifested as taking action in the community beyond the classroom (Byram et al., 2021; Short, 2011).

According to Hofmann et al. (2021), new learning which is gained during professional development courses on intercultural awareness is inconsistently implemented when teachers return to their schools. Therefore, when considering the current issues and research and practical implications, this particular need is prioritised. And to offer PELT teacher educators fresh insights for their course programmes, the three target domains above will be reimagined through recent theoretical lenses. The practical applications will likewise be illustrated by picturebooks for use in teacher education, particularly *Welcome* by Barroux (2016), given its potential for ICit. The theoretical framework draws on Porto and Di Bin's (2022) application of the humanist concept of 'imagined communities' to ICit. This is understood as a pedagogical evoking of teachers' and learners' social justice conscience, made possible by connecting local and national issues to global concerns. The concept of imagined communities is intertwined with a new materialist conceptualisation of the picturebook-as-vibrant catalyst (García-González et al., 2019), capable of disrupting 'us/them national narratives' (p.15)—highly pertinent for both ICit and PELT.

2 Current Issues and Research

Beyond Culture as 'Land and People'

In conceptualising the intercultural domain, the *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (RFCDC, Council of Europe, 2018) is a valuable 'touchstone'. It comprises a comprehensive three volume box set, which includes: a model of competences, learning targets and outcomes for each competence and guidance for implementation in educational settings. It can be considered seminal given its scope and the goal to represent democratic culture for pedagogical purposes by identifying twenty competences within the four categories of values, skills, attitudes and knowledge and critical understanding, shown in Fig. 13.1.

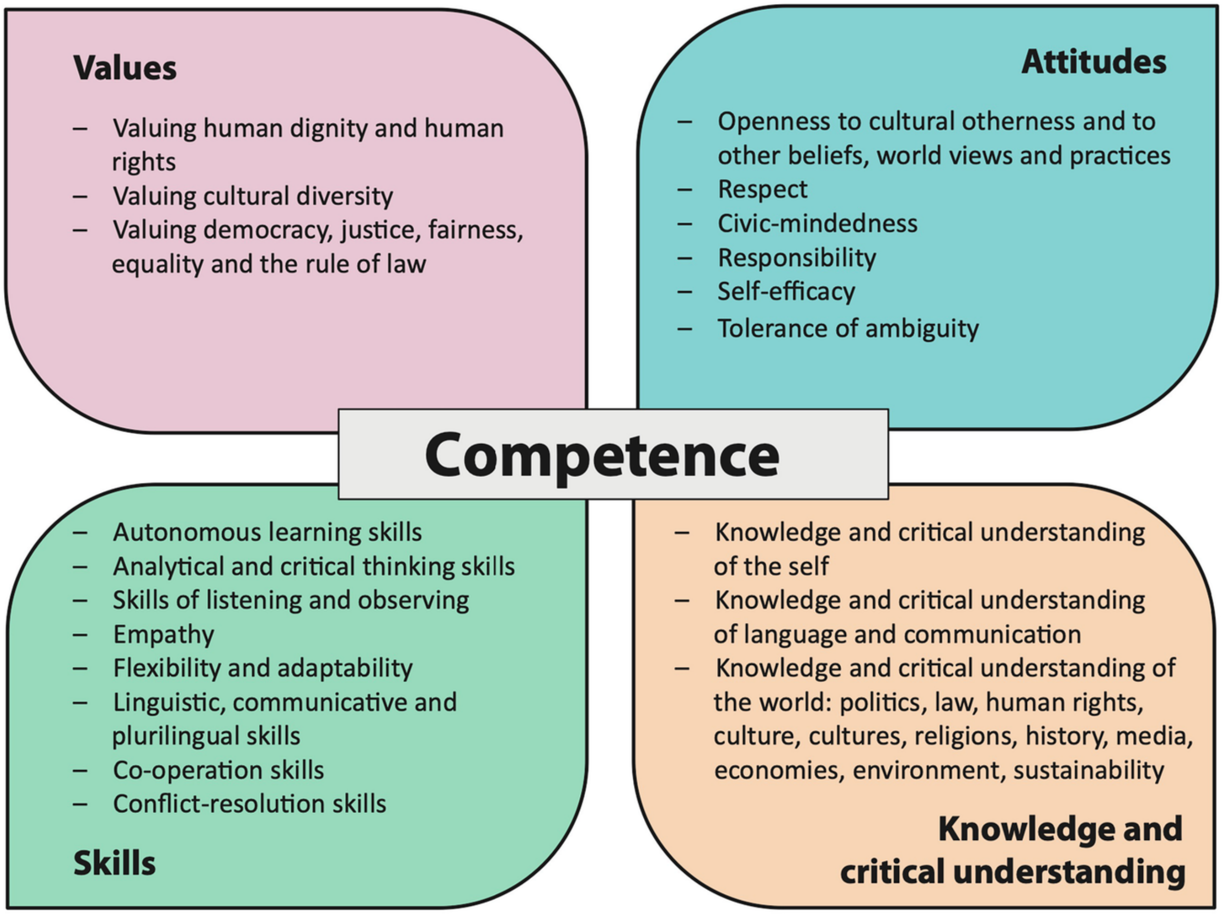
Values
– Valuing human dignity and human rights
– Valuing cultural diversity
– Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law
Attitudes
– Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices
– Respect
– Civic-mindedness
– Responsibility
– Self-efficacy
– Tolerance of ambiguity
Competence
– Autonomous learning skills
– Analytical and critical thinking skills
– Skills of listening and observing
– Empathy
– Flexibility and adaptability
– Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills
– Co-operation skills
– Conflict-resolution skills
Skills
– Knowledge and critical understanding of the self
– Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication
– Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability
Knowledge and critical understanding

Fig. 13.1 Model of Competencies, Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, © Council of Europe (2018), Vol. 1, p. 38

As a key contributor to the RFCDC, Michael Byram and his approach to ICit (1997 & 2021), extensively based on teacher education, has been especially influential in English language teaching (ELT) research. According to Baker (2022), ICit in ELT engages learners in both pedagogical and real-world experiences. This fuses the global perspective inherent in a world language to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) with citizenship education and its more national and local community orientation. Thereby, ICit provides teachers and their learners with a 'combination of ICC and competences for learning democracy' (Byram et al., 2021, p. 3) and, in turn, challenges and opportunities arise when *simultaneously* teaching sets of language, intercultural and citizenship objectives in the classroom. Furthermore, Read (this volume) highlights a number of challenges specific to PELT, which teachers may encounter when developing children's intercultural competence.

Despite the contributions ICit has made to numerous research projects, these challenges, further exacerbated by insufficient in-service teacher education, may account for the lack of genuine integration of ICit in published materials (see, e.g., Fang & Elyas, 2021; Shin et al., 2011; Waallan Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017), and related PELT classroom practice (Pulverness, 2014). To address these gaps, Read (ibid.) has crafted a creative model for children's intercultural competence which is valuable for PELT classroom practice. Adaptations of the model for different PELT global contexts could counter the situation where primary English lessons reflect what Risager (2007) refers to as 'the land and people' (p. 27) notion of culture. In the classroom, this manifests as facts about the 'English-speaking world', which leads to essentialising whereby stereotypical characteristics about national groups in PELT coursebooks are misinterpreted as representative of *all* members of a particular country/social group at *all* times. With Perez Berbain et al. (2021), in this chapter, ICit is positioned as well suited to diverse intersectional identities, and in this perspective of the cultural domain, characteristics such as age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, social class and ethnicity intersect in plural and dynamic ways.

It is likewise conceivable that the impact of recent major world events, including the COVID-19 pandemic along with the refugee and climate crises, could ignite an increased focus on ICit for PELT, implied by the anecdote at the outset of this chapter. Moreover, recent changes at the primary English curricular level in some contexts reflect greater acknowledgement of the 'inter' in intercultural learning by foregrounding dialogue, understanding and critical thinking, and depart from the ubiquitous 'land and people' approach. For example, the latest iteration of Norway's English curriculum situates learners' encounters with texts, such as picturebooks, firmly within the *inter*cultural domain, 'Working with texts in English helps to develop the pupils' knowledge **and experience** of linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as their insight into **ways of living, ways of thinking**…' (Læreplan i engelsk [English subject curriculum], 2019, p. 3, my emphasis).

In extending Sipe's (2008) view of the picturebook as an 'artistic object', a new materialist perspective is favoured in the chapter, which argues that an experiential focus during professional development means that the book can act as a *dynamic vehicle*. Therefore, when mediated for

ICit in PELT, a well-selected picturebook has potential to help children to gradually raise their awareness of cultural pluralities and intersections and action, manifested for example, as projects to show support for marginalised groups. This conceptualisation could make a significant contribution to in-depth learning and thus, warrants increased attention during in-service English teacher education.

Beyond Pre-While-Post Lesson Frameworks

Despite over three decades of PELT-related research and practice, the influence of pedagogies originally conceived for adult learners of English remains ever-present in published materials, classroom practice for children (Littlejohn, this volume) and by extension, teacher education. Such influence is apparent in pedagogical approaches to texts which, when framed within the development of learners' communicative competence (Kolb & Schocker, 2021), are frequently positioned as linguistic objects. The rationale is to provide children with (often inauthentic) models of grammar and lexis and to practise their reading and listening skills for instrumental purposes, including for example, understanding gist, detailed comprehension and specific information. Such an approach to receptive skills is commonly implemented in PELT via a pre-while-post reading or listening framework, even in teachers' guides such as Ellis and Brewster's (2014) *Tell it again!* where picturebooks are incorporated into PELT materials. While this particular handbook represents a significant contribution to the incorporation of picturebooks into English language education, increased distance is still required to genuinely move away from the pre-while-post skills framework.

Furthermore, when picturebooks are used in PELT solely as vehicles for children's linguistic development, there is an absence of what Short (2019) refers to as 'dialogic enquiry' (p. 7); framing lessons as neatly packaged, tri-phased events further obstructs the development of the critical lens, vital for interculturality. Matos and Melo-Pfeifer (2020) therefore argue the need to move 'beyond the mere efferent reading exercises' (p. 293) commonly found within pre-while-post stages. This is not to suggest that teachers who use such phases do not create engaging contexts for their learners; however, this engagement can be obscured by the pre-teaching of lexis in a decontextualised manner, rather than to encounter language chunks as children listen and notice linguistic and discoursal salience during read-alouds. The ‘while reading aloud’ stage tends to be dominated by a focus on comprehension at the expense of sufficient spaces for multiple, individualised and, divergent interpretations (Matos & Melo-Pfeifer, 2020). The ‘post listening/reading stage’ may enable children to make creative responses in English related to the book’s topic and themes, yet by design, still misses crucial intercultural opportunities for ‘disrupting the commonplace’ (Vasquez et al., 2013, p. 8). Moreover, this ‘post stage’ lacks experientially orientated in-depth learning, whereby children connect their language learning to real-world issues by community-based actions: essential for *doing ICit*.

To help teachers to extend beyond a limited pre-while-post framework, the use of picturebooks for ICit should be a priority for teacher education. There is a need to support teachers to challenge the position of picturebooks as linguistic objects within this lesson shape, especially when ICit and in-depth learning are the goals. As Vannini (2015) argues, ‘Material objects are no mere props for performance…and the interstices of interaction is liable to build new forms of life in which strangeness itself is the locus of new forms of neighbourliness and community’ (pp. 4–6). According to this perspective, the exploration of cultural diversity and children’s community spirit at the local, national and global levels calls instead for the application of a ‘deep reading’ approach (Nikolajeva, 2014) to PELT. Similarly, Bland (2023) has developed a valuable deep reading framework, with four core phases that move away from formulaic teaching procedures, as follows: (1) Unpuzzle and explore; (2) Activate and investigate; (3) Critically engage; (4) Experiment with creative response.

Beyond Cross-Border Collaboration

A core dimension of Byram’s (1997/2021) ICit model is the emphasis on the formation of communities of intercultural citizens. These are language learners involved in citizenship projects for their respective local communities, with communication across borders to plan and share action-taking outcomes, illustrated in Fig. 13.2 (ICEPELL Consortium, 2022).

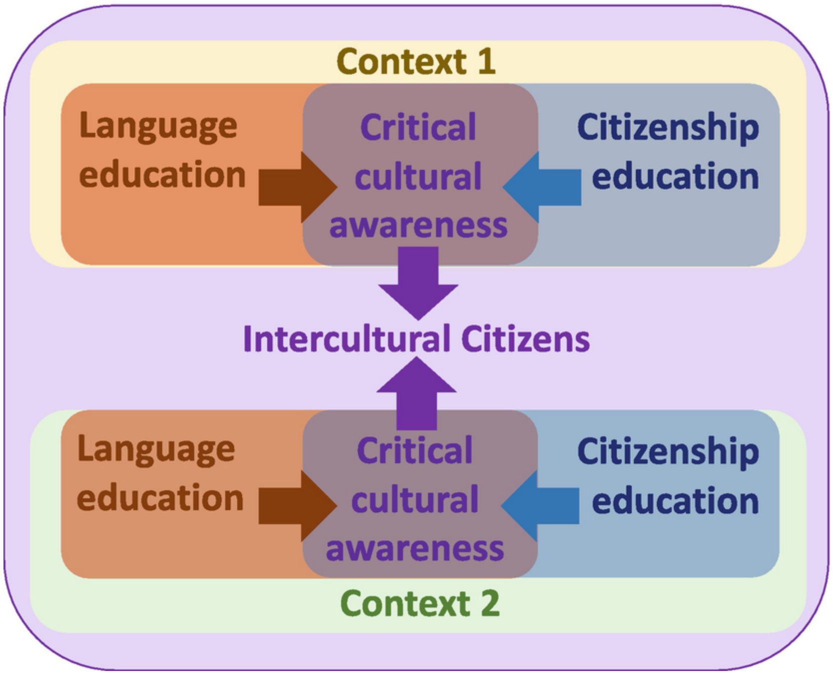
Context 1
Language education
Critical cultural awareness
Citizenship education
Intercultural Citizens
Language education
Critical cultural awareness
Citizenship education
Context 2

Fig. 13.2 Representation of community of intercultural citizens

Baker (2022) highlights how the critical intercultural awareness nexus, shown in Fig. 13.2, or what Byram (1997/2021) refers to as, '*savoir s'engager*' can help teachers and their learners to embrace the neglected political dimension in ELT, crucial for in-depth learning. Such a notion of political engagement, recently refined by Byram et al. (2021), is conceived as, 'taking an interest and action in improving the community or communities in which one lives' (p. 4). Nevertheless, a fundamental question arises about the emphasis on cross-border communication as essential for ICit to manifest. Given the plurality of children's identities in PELT classrooms around the world, there exists significant potential for children to experience diverse cultural perspectives in English (and similarly, in their own languages). For example, a study in Argentina by Porto and Di Bin (2022) reports how children in grades 5 and 6 developed their ecological citizenship awareness through arts-based approaches to taking action in support of environmental issues, making worldwide connections as part of an imagined community of activists. Thus, cross-border collaboration and communication were *not* necessary for in-depth ICit learning.

Another crucial consideration for teacher educators is that the conceptualisation in Fig. 13.2 is not grounded in an educational use of children's literature, such as picturebooks. And, as has been alluded to throughout this chapter, when picturebooks are recognised and mediated as potent educational vehicles, intercultural and citizenship potential can be actualised during primary English lessons. Therefore, teacher education needs to facilitate children's social justice action taking, by aesthetic engagements in evocative storyworlds, without the requirement of cross-border collaboration and transnational communication.

Finally, Byram et al. (2021) raise ethical considerations regarding taking action in the community for ICit, pertinent to PELT. To address these, Short's (2011) 'authentic action' pedagogical framework makes a useful contribution. As shown in Fig. 13.3, Short identifies seven key principles for children to explore intercultural themes beyond-the-book (and beyond-the-classroom) by making real-world connections during their learning journeys. An exploration of the model with teachers and its application to picturebooks during a teacher education course would be fruitful.

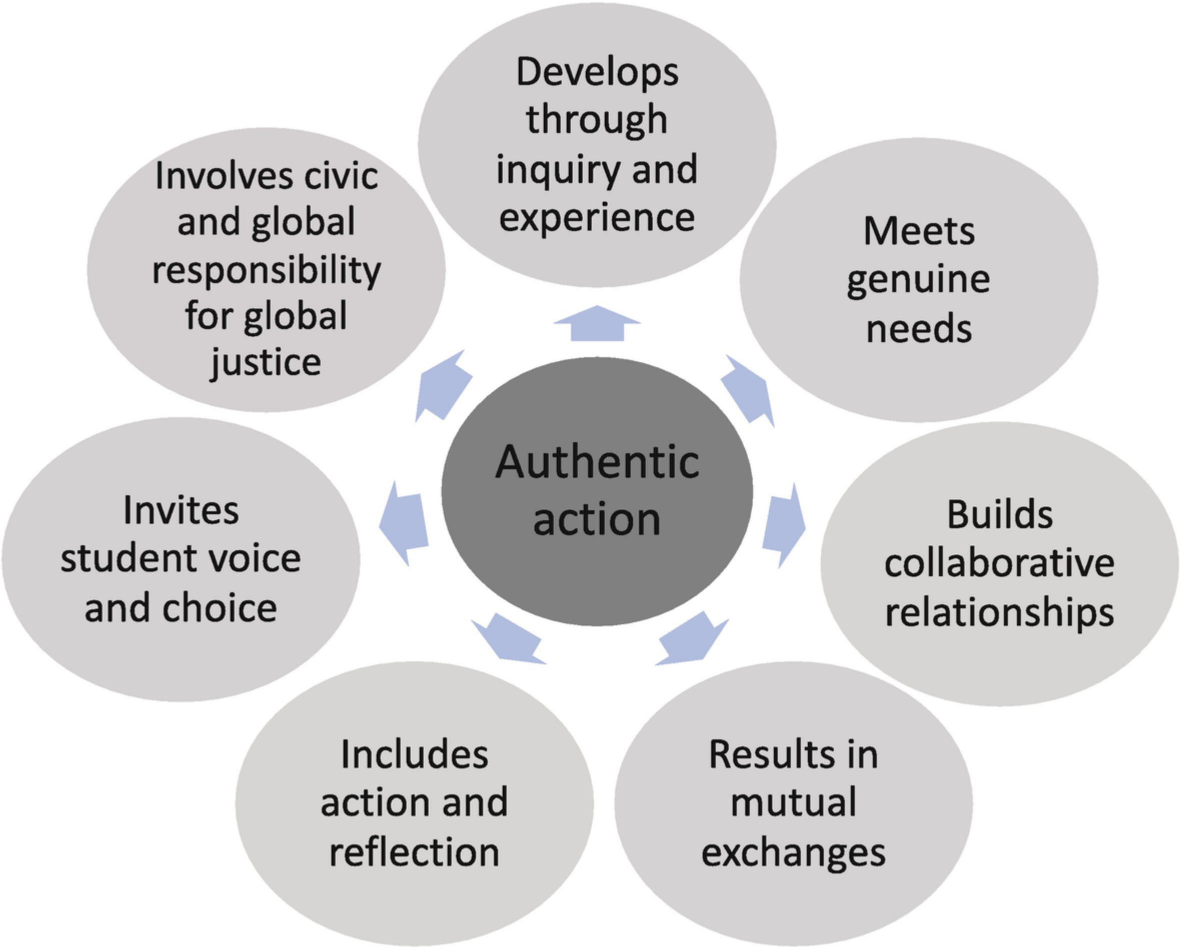
Authentic action
Develops through inquiry and experience
Meets genuine needs
Builds collaborative relationships
Results in mutual exchanges
Includes action and reflection
Invites student voice and choice
Involves civic and global responsibility for global justice

Fig. 13.3 Seven principles for authentic action

3 Practical Applications

Read Against the Text and Create Cultural Identity Maps

A ‘doing culture’ approach moves beyond reflection *about* cultures and instead, prioritises experiential, dialogic and collaborative learning during professional development (Kolb & Schocker, 2021). To introduce the concept of critical interculturality to PELT practitioners more familiar with the ‘land and people’ tradition and used to facts about majority English-speaking countries in their classrooms, essentialised notions can be mediated as a valuable entry point. This is because a carefully selected picturebook title refreshes teachers’ schema (Nikolajeva, 2014) and provides them with opportunities to read against the text, rather than with it, and question rather than accept the cultural facts it supposedly represents. From a new materialist perspective, the picturebook as ‘matter is seen as vital and vibrant … and acts as a catalyst for something new emerging’ (Bozalek, 2018, p. 298) and this newness is seen as teachers in the process of a pivot towards diverse, nuanced understandings of and relations within the intercultural domain (Pérez Berbain et al., 2021).

Based on the principles above, teacher educators could select a picturebook with an exaggerated, stereotypical, tourist-like lens on a majority English-speaking nation such as the United Kingdom. For example, during a recent teacher development project, *The Queen’s Hat* by Steve Antony (2015) was chosen as an exemplar of this type (Mourão, 2022, p. 39). This is a humorous story about how one day a strong gust of wind blows the Queen’s hat away and her servants chase it across London, passing several famous sites on the way. The visual and verbal text and the cultural content it conveys is so stereotypical that it is fair to suggest that the protagonist is a caricature. Utilising Mourao’s original idea, teacher-participants’ schemata about the Queen and tourist sites they may have visited in London or seen online can be activated by the front cover as well as the front endpapers. They can be asked to find the Queen, her butler, the corgi and her hat hidden among the many soldiers and in groups, brainstorm what they know about the late Queen Elizabeth II and tourist attractions in London. Facts from the groups can then be collated and used for a prediction task, where teachers listen to an initial read-aloud to check which of the famous places are in the picturebook.

In enabling teachers to read against (and beyond) this single tourist story of London as reflected in the picturebook, especially the stereotypical tea drinking at the end, pairs could discover facts as an online quest. For example: *According to recent statistics, (1) What proportion of all Londoners are foreign born? (2) How many languages are approximately spoken in London?* While in plenary, teachers could consider the questions for their own places of residence, before they reflect on the absence of key facts from *The Queen's Hat* and the implications for interculturality during English lessons. Then, to provide an intercultural learning opportunity, from the 'imagined community' concept, teachers collaborate in an online research task to discover the communities in diverse London neighbourhoods (such as Camden, Brixton, Waltham Forest, Golders Green, Tooting, Ealing and New Malden). They can present multimodal ensembles (Shin, this volume), to share their findings as an interactive classroom gallery walk with paper or digital posters. Reading against and beyond the text in this way helps to experientially challenge cultural stereotypes and therefore raises teachers' awareness of interculturality through a diversity lens (Pérez Berbain et al., 2021).

The subsequent stage of teachers' awareness journey involves a challenge to the equation of culture-as-nation (Ibrahim, 2022; McConachy, 2018) and, in turn, to challenge essentialist thinking. Using arts-based approaches for diverse perspective-taking (García-González et al., 2019), teachers can creatively explore their own individual cultural identities. Based on a teacher development project with an experimental approach to picturebook materials creation for ICit (Mourão, ibid., p. 39), the picturebook, *My Map Book* by Sarah Fanelli (2007) provides an evocative springboard. The teacher educator can reveal only the title, teachers brainstorm different types of maps and what they are used for, followed by group definitions of 'a map'. These can be collated on the board and used in a task for the initial read-aloud, where teachers decide if any of their definitions relate to the understandings of 'a map' in the picturebook.

During the second read-aloud, for each map, for example, *map of my dog, map of my heart,* teachers consider which aspects of cultural identity the visuals might relate to. This helps to shift the focus from author intention (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001) whereby, teachers and their learners make their own interpretations about the literary text, rather than any single story. It also foregrounds the fluidity inherent in all cultural identities

(Ibrahim, 2022). After the read-aloud, teachers choose one of the maps from the book and discuss what they would include on a personalised map which visualises for example, their day, their stomach, their face, their jacket and so on. To move beyond the book, teachers then work individually, focused on their own cultural identities to visually present as a map. Once their creations are ready, they regroup to share maps, and take part in genuine dialogue about each other's cultural identities. Finally, the plenary debrief should enable reflection on what they learned, how they felt and the implications for children in PELT.

Notice Picturebook Potentialities and Ponder the Peritext

Picturebook 'mediation' in PELT begins with the selection of a title (Ellis & Mourão, 2021) and to provide an experiential approach to book selections during a course, the teacher educator could actively demonstrate the process of a selection. This approach requires the teacher educator to share rationales for selection decisions using think-aloud techniques, focused on ICit themes. An exemplar of a picturebook for 'doing ICit' in PELT is *Welcome* by Barroux (2016), selected here for the ways in which it fuses the refugee and climate crises. This picturebook has considerable potential for learners to enter imagined communities and to develop eco-activism in a stand against climate change. To help teachers to consider the potential of *Welcome* for PELT, the selections session could commence with an initial read-aloud by the teacher educator, accompanied by a task whereby teachers listen and contemplate the themes. *Welcome* features several anthropomorphised animal characters including polar bears, monkeys, cows, giraffes and a panda, which provides distance for children to encounter this emotionally charged issue, that is, the experiences of some climate refugees.

Based on Bland's (2023) four-phase 'deep reading for in-depth learning framework', the first phase 'unpuzzle and explore' helps to cultivate a literary apprenticeship with picturebooks (Ommundsen et al., 2022) for PELT. To concretely move beyond the formulaic pre-while-post lesson shape, the complexity of the picturebook as an aesthetic vehicle needs to be experienced, and this responds to Sipe's (2008) call for 'literal cover to cover' exploration. In practice, the teacher educator provides each group of teachers a copy of the focal picturebook, *Welcome* in this case, accompanied by prompts for aesthetic and, peritextual features (such as the covers, endpapers, blurb, title, etc.). A guided discovery task with prompt questions can support noticing and is adaptable for any ICit-related picturebook selections (Table 13.1).

Table 13.1 Noticing questions for picturebooks with ICit-themes

How could you mediate the	
1.	… covers to enrich your English language lesson contexts for children?
2.	… covers for children to contemplate the peritextual features?
3.	… title for children to make predictions about the settings and characters?
4.	… visuals to help children notice details related to the characters' experiences?
5.	… themes for ICit in your primary English language lessons?

After they have discussed the questions in groups, teachers can regroup 'jigsaw style', where each new group shares their ideas for a different question, then, the cohort come together for plenary feedback. Subsequently, teacher groups repeat the guided discovery task, but this time they use the five questions for a picturebook with potential to meet their class's needs in relation to ICit and English language curricular goals.

Co-Create Materials around Picturebooks with ICit Themes

Once teachers have collaboratively experienced a picturebook for their English lessons and engaged dialogically about its potential for ICit, they can co-create pedagogical materials for a range of primary school grades. The creation process can be scaffolded with a flexible framework suitable for a series of English lessons, adaptable for the time teachers can devote to work around the picturebook. Aligned with Ellis and Mourão's (2021) principles for picturebook mediation, a four-stage framework is proposed: 1. Create curiosity; 2. Ponder the peritext; 3. Delve more deeply; 4. Act authentically. The contrasts between the pre-while-post and the read-aloud frameworks at the rationale and technique levels are outlined in Table 13.2. Teacher educators could explore these with teacher-participants whereby groups create posters to illustrate how approaches to text in ELT fundamentally differ.

Table 13.2 ELT receptive skills framework and picturebook read-aloud framework

Stage	Receptive skills framework	Read-aloud framework
1.	**Set context**	**Create curiosity**

Stage	Receptive skills framework	Read-aloud framework
	Leads into the text quickly and can be dominated by heavy pre-teaching of lexis which the learners may not know. Can be highly decontextualised.	Activates children’s schemata of the themes in the picturebook in a personalised manner. Makes life-to-text connections and raises curiosity.
2.	**Pre reading/listening** Primes learners to comprehend a text and involves teacher-determined / coursebook questions which reinforces a focus on right and wrong answers.	**Ponder the peritext** Involves the picturebook’s peritextual features, such as the covers, endpapers, title and other visually significant aspects. Triggers children’s playful predictions.
3.	**While reading/listening** Moves formulaically from gist/general understanding to more detailed comprehension. Tasks and activities for reading/listening are dominated by a search for answers.	**Delve more deeply** Involves an exploration of visual and verbal text and connections to the characters, plots, settings and themes in individual ways and empathy with the characters’ lives.
4.	**Post reading/listening** Enables children to make a personalised response to the text’s topic or theme, often completed quickly with minimal follow-up.	**Act authentically** Makes creative connections to issues of local, national and global significance and provides scaffolding for community-related action plans.

To scaffold teachers’ picturebook materials for ICit, they should have been introduced to Short’s (2011) seven principles for authentic action. Table 13.3 offers suggestions for implementation, organised as (**A**) deep reading experiences during a teacher education course; (**B**) planning mediation in the PELT classroom; (**C**) in-depth learning suggestions beyond-the-book. Teachers can use Short’s principles as scaffolds for lesson task and activity cycles within the read aloud framework in Table 13.2. In this way, teachers can creatively apply deep reading approaches and in the classroom, they then implement the principles. Through the materials, teachers can enable children to trampoline into actions as a picturebook-inspired imaginary community (Table 13.3).

Table 13.3 Application of Short’s principles to *Welcome*

Principle 1: Develops inquiry and experience	
A: deep reading experiences	– Pondering the front and back covers to disrupt the commonplace. – Connecting teachers’ experiences of including refugee children in their classes and/or climate change in their contexts.
B: planning for mediation	– Using the title for predictions by asking, *Who do you think is welcome? Who might be saying ‘welcome’?*

	– Chorusing the onomatopoeic, CRACK!, activating schemata of melting icebergs.
C: in-depth learning /beyond-the-book	– Considering community spaces where *Welcome* signs are missing. – Conducting research to find real-life examples where people have not been welcomed when moving countries. – Completing K-W-L chart about the climate crisis.
Principle 2: Meets genuine needs	
A: deep reading experiences	– Eliciting responses to the unwillingness to meet diverse needs in the plot. – Discussing reasons for fusion of two global crises in the picturebook.
B: planning for mediation	– Checking understanding of ‘the plight of migrants’ using own language(s). – Comparing the blurb with predictions and eliciting thoughtful feelings.
C: in-depth learning / beyond-the-book	– Showing the publisher’s website which explains the Syrian refugee crisis in Europe influenced the creation of *Welcome*. – Sharing what they know about the refugee crisis and working in groups on children’s news sites. – Regrouping to share findings.
Principle 3: Builds collaborative relationships	
A: deep reading experiences	– Questioning during read-alouds to encourage teachers to expand their roles beyond ‘spectators’. – Encouraging noticing of visual positioning of the characters and how this reflects the unfolding situation.
B: planning for mediation	– Asking: *What do you think you might see / hear / smell in the boat? How long do you think you could be at sea?* – Becoming ‘typography detectives’, noticing features such as **bold**, *italics* and larger font.
C: in-depth learning / beyond-the-book	– Creating image ensembles with photographs of polar bears and monkeys in their natural habitats and brainstorming threats. – Creating a fourth ‘rejection’ opening, using another animal group with the accompanying excuse. – Enacting the rejection spreads as group role plays.
Principle 4: Results in mutual exchanges	
A: deep reading experiences	– Reading against the text: how representative the characters are of ‘climate refugees’. – Allocating a refugee-themed picturebook, similar to and/or different from refugee experiences in *Welcome*.
B: planning for mediaton	– Sharing an extract from the Kirkus Reviews (2016) review of *Welcome*, *‘Refugees forced to find a new home … deserve better storytelling than this’*.

	– Brainstorming other ways the animals could be drawn and sharing artistic representations.
C: in-depth learning / beyond-the-book	– Debating whether animals should be used in picturebooks to depict refugee experiences. – Pondering how *Welcome* might differ if the characters were people instead of animals. – Sharing findings with the class and devising a ‘good practice’ checklist for artwork involving animals.
Principle 5: Includes action and reflection	
A: deep reading experiences	– Reflecting on ICit learning following the creative tasks. – Reflecting on actions to change their pedagogical practices.
B: planning for mediation	– Rating by giving individual responses to the picturebook using visual techniques, for example, by drawing numbers of icebergs to show feelings. – Using a turning points ‘wheel’ activity and saying why they feel that is a big moment of change.
C: in-depth learning / beyond-the-book	– Considering their action taking more deeply in terms of thoughtful feelings. – Drawing up mini action plans for further individual actions.
Principle 6: Invites student voice and choice	
A: deep reading experiences	– Choosing creative response tasks, e.g., creative writing, dramatisation, arts-based. – Sharing reasons for choices with peers.
B: planning for mediation	– Recreating the *‘I spy’* game in the book by choosing another setting for the climate / refugee crisis. – Co-creating *‘I spy’* scenes and sharing. – Designing new welcome mats with *‘Welcome’* written in multiple languages.
C: in-depth learning / beyond-the-book	– Co-creating an outreach project to connect with refugees in local communities. – Planning activities which show solidarity by asking refugees how they could feel more welcome. – Providing language support to enable the children to ask sensitive questions.
Principle 7: Involves civic / global responsibility for social justice	
A: deep reading experiences	– Using learning from picturebook-related tasks to consider local, national and global connections based on ICit.
B: planning for mediation	– Using final opening spread of *‘Welcome’* for recreating the island scene by making a rockery with refugees. – Sharing the rockery scenes with children in other school grades.

C: in-depth learning / beyond-the-book	– Engaging children in communication with refugees in the community. – Using discoveries of commonalities to plan ways to be more welcoming. – Sharing community action plans synchronously with children in other contexts.

Materials creation based on Short’s seven principles offers teacher educators and teachers multiple opportunities for ‘doing ICit’. Nevertheless, as Tomlinson and Masuhara (2018) highlight, in teacher education involving materials creation, the evaluation stage is too often omitted. Whereas, if peer and self-evaluation are included, further opportunities emerge for deep reading of picturebook materials. The rating scale adapted from Valente (2022, p. 57) in Table 13.4 can be used by teacher educators for this purpose.

Table 13.4 Evaluation questions based on picturebook co-created materials

Evaluate your group’s materials. ***Use ticks to give a rating:*** *✓ ✓ ✓ = the tasks & activities do this very well* *✓ ✓ = the tasks & activities do this well* *✓ = the tasks and activities need more work*		**Group rating**
1	... activate children’s prior knowledge of the picturebook’s themes?	
2	... engage children’s curiosity in the picturebook aesthetically?	
3	... make use of the peritextual features to spark children’s ideas and predictions?	
4	... capture the drama of the turning of the page while reading aloud?	
5	... prompt active interpretation of the picturebook images?	
6	... provide listening / reading opportunities beyond comprehension?	
7	... recognise the importance of including #ownvoices?	
8	... give space in the classroom for the experiences of marginalised groups?	
9	... develop children’s thoughtful feelings about the characters’ lived experiences?	
10	... encourage children to engage in action taking in the community?	

4 Conclusion

In this chapter, an increased appetite for engagement with real-world issues and the related need to facilitate children’s in-depth learning in PELT have been highlighted. It has additionally been argued that the desire to transcend instrumental approaches to children's language education is a challenge to put into practice, due to a dearth of published pedagogical materials, exacerbated by a lack of awareness of age-sensitive approaches for ICit. Furthermore, in-service teacher education has been considered for its potential to make a valuable contribution with fresh approaches to ICit in PELT, infused by the principled selection and use of picturebooks. Such a perspective is underpinned by humanist theories, based on the concept of imagined communities and intertwined with the new materialist view of the picturebook as a vibrant catalyst.

Three key core domains have been considered in an interrelated manner, the mediation of picturebook read-alouds, deep reading approaches to narratives and in-depth learning as embodied actions beyond-the-classroom. This has been argued to require increased proactivity by teacher educators to move beyond a land and people tradition, transcend a pre-while-post receptive skills framework and critically address the (mis)equating of cross-border collaborations as necessary for children's interculturality. Finally, practical applications crafted for in-service primary English teacher education have been proposed. Each of these prioritises collaborative, experiential and dialogic approaches to maximise classroom practitioners' uptake as they embrace ICit with children.

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14. Mainstreaming Metacognitive Practices in Primary English Teacher Education Programmes

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1 Introduction

The construct of an effective teacher is a complex web of intricacies and the contemporary demands on a teacher have increased exponentially as the understanding of the complexities of the child and the socially constructed nature of childhood continue to unravel. We refer here to the child typically aged between 7 and 12 years receiving primary education. Thus, it is not surprising that these demands have also fuelled an expectation for primary teachers to not only possess a wide-ranging repertoire of teaching strategies but that these must also be evidence-based practices. As such, the knowledge base of the primary English language teacher has to likewise grow.

In such a context, the spotlight shines on a familiar construct—metacognition. Metacognition has gained increasing focus in the educational field aided by strong evidence support. Perry et al. (2019) conducted a wide-scale review of the English education system in the United Kingdom and cited strong evidence for a positive correlation between when metacognition is effectively taught in schools and learner outcomes. In addition, evidence indicates a positive relationship between teaching metacognition and children's well-being. Zhang and Zhang (2018) assert that teachers can no longer afford to leave metacognition out of language teaching and learning, citing research findings that show effective and less effective learners differing according to their metacognitive levels and the beneficial impact of metacognition instruction on language learning effectiveness.

As the focus on metacognition has grown, it has found its place among policy makers. There has been general acknowledgement that it is an integral skill which leads to the need for it to be included in the context of education, from policies to pedagogical practices (OECD, 2019). Likewise in Singapore, metacognition is accorded prominence and explicitly marked as one of the new pedagogical emphases in the most recent iteration of the English Language national syllabus (*Curriculum Planning & Development Division (CPDD*), 2020). In tandem with this, teacher metacognition may soon become a key focal area in teacher education in the light of positive research findings which deem it an asset that can better facilitate language learning. There has been growing consensus of its importance in ensuring successful thinking and learning (McCormick, 2003) as well as effective teaching (Prytula, 2012). In addition, Lee et al.'s (2015) study sees teachers' self-awareness as a necessary precondition for increasing learners' metacognitive abilities. This is important as Kramarski and Michalsky (2009) argue that teacher metacognition can promote teacher development. More recent studies also support this notion that teachers' pedagogical competencies can be enhanced through metacognition (Fathima et al., 2014). These studies serve to support the link between metacognition and a better application of methodology.

This chapter focuses on primary English language education in Singapore in the context of teacher education and ways teachers can be supported in metacognitive instruction through embedded practices so as to integrate this dimension in their English language classrooms. Starting by explicating metacognition in the context of the Singaporean primary classroom, this is followed by outlining the place of metacognition in the national curriculum. Specific course practices are then described within a pre-service teacher education programme intended to equip primary English language teachers with the knowledge and skills of metacognitive instruction for primary English language teaching and learning. The chapter concludes with reflective insights and implications for the integration of metacognition instruction in pre-service primary English teacher education programmes.

2 Research Issues

The Footprint of Metacognition

While commonly understood as *thinking about thinking*, the fuzziness of this concept is also simultaneously acknowledged, leaving often a tangled mess when attempting to concretise and define it. John Flavell, widely considered as one of the pioneers of research on metacognition in education, defines the concept as ‘one’s knowledge concerning one’s own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them’ (Flavell, 1976, p. 232). He offers three domains to encapsulate an understanding of this elusive construct: metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experiences and metacognitive strategies (Flavell, 1979); the first referring to one’s knowledge or beliefs about the cognitive process in completing a task, the second to capture moments when one becomes aware of the progress one is making in a cognitive process, which then leads to the third domain where one acquires and consciously activates metacognitive strategies during a cognitive process. However, Flavell also acknowledges that these three domains may not be entirely distinct and that there is a certain degree of overlap.

While there is general acceptance of the importance of metacognition, criticisms persist, particularly due to the inconsistencies when conceptualising it. This is obscured further by differences or conflations of terminology in such discussions arising inevitably from varied academic goals, interests and contexts (Haukås et al., 2018). As it is not the intention of this chapter to debate the accuracy of the term, instead an understanding of the construct and what it means particularly in the primary English language education in Singapore will be explored to highlight the expectations on pre-service teachers when integrating this aspect in the primary English classroom. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) note that while the concept has been applied in various ways, 'a common basic understanding' underlies them all (p. 83). It is the ability to think about our own thinking, how we process information and how we manage the way we do it.

Metacognition in the National Syllabus

This chapter favours the definition of metacognition which refers to an awareness of one's own thoughts on one's specific English language teaching and learning situation. Wenden (1987) could perhaps be credited as one of the pioneers who explored metacognition in the context of language teaching and learning. Drawing on Flavell's (1979) work, she acknowledges that *metacognitive knowledge* comprises three parts: person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge. Her work proposed the notion of learner autonomy whereby she posits that learners who are metacognitively aware are able to engage in self-directed learning and can manage their own learning process. It is also in Wenden's (1991, 1998) work where the constructs of metacognition and strategy use are amalgamated.

Vandergrift and Goh (2012) proposed a metacognitive framework which further explores the above in the specific context of listening instruction. They define it as metacognitive awareness which is understood as the 'state of consciousness' when one is focusing on a 'particular cognitive or learning situation' (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012, p. 84) and which comprises three components: metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experience, and strategy use. It is this last component that perhaps might lead to self-management in learning. The authors clarify that in this component, it is more than just strategy knowledge; it is a building on of this knowledge to incorporate an awareness of the *when* and *how* in using strategies.

This model can be identified in the recent primary English Language Syllabus (CPDD, 2020) implemented in Singapore. In this most recent iteration, metacognition is explicitly highlighted as one of the new pedagogical emphases (alongside multiliteracies, and inquiry through dialogue). In this chapter, it is acknowledged that language learning involves not just the cognitive aspect of processing information but also the application of metacognitive strategies. Teachers are hence urged to support learners in the use of metacognitive strategies so that children's learning can be strengthened and self-regulated. This is further detailed in the English Language Syllabus (CPDD, 2020) in the Reading and Viewing subsection. Here, metacognitive strategies are to be applied so as to help learners to 'actively regulate reading and viewing' (CPDD, 2020, p. 48). A suite of examples is provided for the teacher educator to infuse into language learning, encompassing planning, identifying, selecting skills and strategies, monitoring, adjusting, evaluating the effectiveness and reflecting on the selection of skills and strategies. It is also noteworthy that the evaluation of the effectiveness of use can be based on feedback from others or self-appraisal, providing a hint of the individual and social learning enterprises incorporated in Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) model.

The syllabus is complemented by the core curriculum for primary schools, Strategies for English Language Learning and Reading (known as STELLAR), and these metacognitive elements are further distilled through teaching and learning resources such as self and/or peer checklists, reflective questions, discussion questions, and rubrics.

Metacognition in Teacher Education Programmes

To ease student teachers into effective metacognitive practices as explicated in the national syllabus, teacher education programmes likewise need to act in tandem. The focus here is on how an existing teacher education programme seeks to support teachers by developing their own metacognitive thinking as well as in enhancing metacognition instruction given its emphasis in the Singaporean syllabus. Specifically, the Postgraduate in Diploma in Education primary (PGDE (pri)) programme for student teachers in the area of English language methodology in primary schools will be highlighted. Student teachers who join this programme have completed a general first degree and the PGDE (pri) initially offered as a one-year course, has been extended to 16 months and currently qualifies the majority of teachers to teach in primary schools annually.

The Singaporean education system has experienced relatively impressive global standing over the years with consistently good performance in large-scale international assessments, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD, 2019). While numerous factors contribute to this success, it is fair to maintain that one of the most impactful is the teacher. The significance of the teacher impact factor is recognised with some even acknowledging it as the single most important predictor of learners' achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Konstantopoulos & Chung, 2011; Rockoff et al., 2011). The OECD (2013) noted that the development of an effective teacher workforce has become a key focus for countries aiming to improve educational quality. The teacher factor, likewise in Singapore, has been acknowledged as critical and recognised as essential for cultivating sound learning practices. This then lends the benefit of structured support for any spotlighted educational emphasis or initiative from the ministerial level to the institutional level (Yuen, 2017).

Teacher education can be considered an essential pillar for a sound education in Singapore and is offered by a sole institution, the National Institute of Education (NIE) which espouses the principle that metacognitive practices need to start from the teacher. Research also suggests that teachers who are more metacognitively aware are more effective teachers (Duffy et al., 2009). They are likely more accomplished in their self-awareness and self-regulation and hence better able to enhance their teaching practice and primary English language learners' opportunities for being metacognitive. If teachers genuinely desire to teach their learners to think metacognitively, then they themselves first need to have metacognitive awareness and knowledge. Given the acknowledgement of the importance of metacognition and the framing of metacognition in the national syllabus, the pre-service teacher education programme in turn seeks to support teachers in understanding and enacting metacognitive practices in the classroom.

3 Practical Applications

This section offers a design concept which anchors the existing teacher education programme mentioned above. Drawing on Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) model, metacognitive awareness enables learners to become 'self-knowing, self-directed, and self-managed in their learning' (p. 85). The authors furthered this construct to make the distinction between just thinking about thinking and acting on this thinking, terming the latter 'metacognition in action'. This, they argue, makes for effective learning. The framework also draws from sociocultural perspectives on learning and factors in both individual and social learning enterprises. It is this collaborative aspect that has considerable leverage in enhancing these metacognitive practices. While many metacognitive practices typically centre on the individual, in the primary English learning context, there is significant value of strengthening this via collaboration.

Vandergrift and Goh (2012) additionally maintain that for learning to be effective, one must act on the thoughts as well and forward the notion of ‘metacognition in action’ (p. 92), with the following as key characteristics:

- conscious attention to one’s knowledge, experience, and strategic behaviour;
- reflection on thoughts and actions and recording for sharing, analysis, and feedback;
- planning for future learning, based on reflections;
- follow-up actions may be immediate or delayed;
- changes occur in thinking and action in response to changes in the task environment;
- plans and follow-up action may involve two or more individuals; and,
- knowledge or experience is not exclusive to an individual: it can be jointly constructed by two or more individuals.

Based on this framework, a two-pronged approach was adopted in the design of this particular teacher education programme:

1. Explicit instruction in metacognitive practices in the primary English language classroom

2. Embedded metacognitive practices in English language methodology courses

The first is to provide student teachers with strategy knowledge and the second intends to foster strategy use. Table 14.1 shows how these dimensions are actualised across the English language methodology courses throughout the programme.

Table 14.1 Metacognitive strategy knowledge and use in teacher education programme

Course components	**Integration within the programme**
Explicit instruction in metacognitive practices	
Input and tutorials on language and skills areas (reading, writing, listening, speaking, lexis and	Metacognitive practices are interwoven while raising student teachers’ language and skills

Course components	Integration within the programme
grammar)	awareness
Practices that develop student teachers' metacognitive thinking	
Teaching demonstrations and micro-teaching	Metacognitive practices are encountered by student teachers experientially in simulated teaching situations
Practicum (guided lesson observations and (co-)teaching)	Metacognitive practices are experimented with in the context of the classroom, linked to the teacher education course

Explicit Instruction in Metacognitive Practices in the Primary English Classroom

A two-pronged approach can be adopted when providing explicit instruction to student teachers. The first part involves enhancing student teachers' knowledge regarding the syllabus itself, specifically what metacognition and metacognitive knowledge entails. The second part involves building student teachers' competencies in metacognitive instructional practices that can be mainstreamed within language and skills areas. These are introduced during lectures and further explored during tutorials and in this way student teachers are guided as to which metacognitive practices are suitable for use with primary English language learners in different school grades. These relate to student teachers being aware of their own knowledge about tasks and accompanying strategies, in addition to an increasing ability to monitor, self-regulate, and control own cognitive activity within discussions, guided reflections, self-evaluations, and checklists.

An example of how this works in practice can be seen when teaching writing. Student teachers are introduced to writing rubrics and how they can be used to help young writers reflect on and improve their writing in specific areas using the Teacher Six-Point Writing Guide (Spandel, 2013). Student teachers are provided with an authentic learner script and collaboratively agree and formulate the success criteria. They then match from the rubric descriptors writing techniques that can be improved based on the authentic script, for example, one of the descriptors for the highest level for the *Idea* criteria is that writing is 'clear, focused, compelling, and holds the reader's attention'. The student teachers brainstorm ways that primary learners could identify whether their pieces meet this criterion and if not, how it could be improved. Enabling student teachers to consider the child’s life stage and the work done in the classroom helps reconcile explicit instruction on metacognitive practices with actual classroom realities. In addition, they also experience a simulated metacognitive experience (from the perspective of the learner) which enables them to better craft targeted metacognitive practices.

Embedded Metacognitive Practices in Primary English Language Methodology Courses

This section highlights specific course practices that embed metacognitive practices in pre-service teacher education. These span different periods of the course programmes, and here the focus will be on the collaborative aspect and how this is actually harnessed to enhance pre-service teachers’ metacognitive practices.

Teaching Demonstrations and Micro-teaching

Teaching demonstrations refer to a teacher educator enacting the target teaching strategy with some of the student teachers playing the role of the children in an intended primary school grade. At the end of the demonstration, the student teachers collaborate in small groups consisting of role play participants and observers and based on these dual perspectives, they reflect on the enacted lesson in the light of the focal pedagogical principles. This progresses to a plenary with the teacher educator leading a debrief of the lesson. In their groups, the discussions are led by the student teachers themselves with the goal being for them to draw from the course content covered prior to the session, to make connections, and to co-construct learning. They first identify key teacher moves (visible steps taken by the teacher to achieve pedagogical aims) together with the pedagogical principles driving these moves and then discuss the effectiveness of the lesson and ways it could be approached differently in a future lesson. As some group members in the group have participated as ‘children’, the discussion becomes richer. During these reflective discussions, affective and social processes are also discussed for example, how comfortable they are with enacting the key moves, what adaptations might need to be made in the actual primary classroom, what challenges they may face and ways they could address these.

To facilitate these discussions, groups are provided with a template (Appendix 1). The first column provides trigger prompts covering key features of the target approach. In this example, the Shared Book Approach (SBA) is used, which is a well-known approach for sharing picturebooks with children (Lambert, 2015). The second column guides student teachers to note their observations on key teacher moves to help them bridge theoretical principles and practice. The third column enables them to unpack the first two columns and the final column focuses on metacognitive thinking. For example, the student teachers collaboratively contemplate the potential impact of activating schema (a key move in teaching reading) during the lesson. They reflect on this experience by first reviewing what they understand by 'activating schema', then by identifying the specific move the teacher made to do this and the pedagogical principle behind it in the second column. In the third column, the student teachers evaluate this move made in activating schema for its effect on the 'class'. This can be extended to a group exploration of alternative ways to activate schema during this lesson context. Each group's observations differ despite having participated in the same lesson and even when the same teacher move is noticed, it is interpreted differently. Alternating between the teacher and learner roles also enables student teachers to interweave metacognitive practices from their own teacher-learner perspective as well as from the child-learner's perspective. This further facilitates connections between explicit instruction in metacognitive practices in the primary English language classroom and supports student teachers for when they eventually use these practices in future.

Teaching demonstrations are followed by micro-teaching where each group plans and delivers a lesson in order to anchor a target teaching strategy. The groups rotate to teach their lessons with each student teacher having an opportunity to adopt the role of the teacher. The other team members play the role of the children and the other groups act as observers. Following the lesson, the group which has just delivered the micro-teaching are also given time to reflect on their lesson, evaluating each other's parts as well as the lesson as a whole. In addition, the 'teachers' individually reflect on their experience and record these reflections in their digital portfolios. By reflecting in groups and self-reflecting individually, student teachers can engage in metacognitive discussions centred on their task delivery and strategy use as well as the processes of lesson delivery, thus enhancing their metacognition.

The discussion frame (Appendix 1) can be readily reused to facilitate these discussions as the student teachers are familiar with the terms and routine, therefore are able to transfer their understanding to another personalised context. During these twinned practices, a variety of metacognitive practices are embedded as shown in Table 14.2.

Table 14.2 Embedded metacognitive practices during teacher education phases

Course components	**Procedures**	**Embedded metacognitive practices**
Teaching demonstrations	• Student teachers are shown and guided through the steps of the target teaching strategy • Intensive debriefs at the end of the teaching demonstration scaffolds thought processes, including the affective and social processes during the demonstration lesson	• Student teachers match the simulated practice to aspects of theory • Student teachers evaluate how well they are able to connect with the pedagogical principles, and reflect on the effectiveness of key teacher moves
Micro-teaching	• Student teachers work in groups to plan and deliver a lesson using a target teaching strategy • Groups receive feedback from peers and the teacher educator, aligned to their assessed teaching practice • The group evaluates their strengths and areas for improvement	• Student teachers plan and apply input knowledge and an accompanying target teaching strategy • They monitor their own progress and self-regulation of their lesson delivery • They become more aware of their own subject knowledge and the need for skilled pedagogical delivery
Individual reflection (digital portfolios)	• Individual student teachers review their own micro-teaching • They record these reflections in their digital portfolios	• Reflecting on and reviewing of the lesson delivery and the thinking processes applied to lesson enactment and delivery • Reflect on one’s own thinking and learning in the application of the literacy area or target teaching strategy • Evaluating and drawing up of action points to be applied in future lesson planning

Teaching Attachment

During the PGDE (pri) programme, student teachers have two opportunities to engage in teaching practice at a primary school. The first is the Teaching

Attachment (TA) which is a combination of observations of experienced teachers' lessons with some unassessed (co-)taught lesson slots. The aim of TA is to strengthen the theory–practice nexus with content input being interwoven with actual field practice. Student teachers are attached to a school for four days a week and they return to their course on the final day each week where the cohort make theory-to-practice links by sharing their observation notes and classroom-based experiences. The TA schedule and framework provides an extended opportunity for embedding metacognitive practices. The lesson observation and reflection cycles follow a structured schedule focusing on specific areas as shown in Table 14.3. In each area, the student teachers are supported by templates with guiding questions.

Table 14.3 TA schedule

Week	Focus area
1	Preparation for attachment to schools
2	Learner profile of the classes observed
3	Lesson preparation and implementation
4	Role of feedback and assessment

Metacognitive thinking is applied by the student teachers as they plan, monitor, and evaluate their own thinking and learning through the weekly lesson discussions as well as their written reflections. Appendices 2 and 3 illustrate the thinking frames for lesson observation and co-teaching which occurs during weeks 3 and 4. Student teachers are provided trigger prompts organised according to key aspects of teaching processes and professionalism which intend to promote deeper reflection in a personalised manner. In these frames, there is space for open-ended responses which enable student teachers to make links with what has been explored during the English language methodology courses and the primary school context, as can be seen in these questions from Part 2 (Appendix 3) in particular:

> (4a) Were there any differences between your NIE course input and the classroom? If yes, please give examples.
> (4b) What challenges between theory and practice arose and how did you address these in the classroom? Please give examples.

These questions act as springboards for encouraging thought not only regarding difficulties resulting from the theory-practice nexus but also why these emerge and prompt student teachers to reconcile these in a practical sense.

Returning to the definition of metacognition as an awareness of one’s own thoughts specifically in English language teaching and learning, the embedded metacognitive practices described above surface the individual student teacher’s engagement in metacognition. In all these teacher education practices, the teacher as learner weaves between cognitive content input, application of input to specific contexts, monitoring progress, and finally, evaluation of application and execution of relevant input. In this way, student teachers are not passively receiving theory; they are actively interacting with learned content in making pedagogical progress in a personalised manner.

Furthermore, in the way Vandergrift and Goh (2012) advocate ‘metacognition in action’, the thinking frames raise student teachers’ awareness of pedagogical moves both for themselves as well as those observed when performed by other teachers. They review these moves during their tutorials as well as in an authentic primary classroom setting in school while undertaking their practicum. As the review stage occurs both at the individual level as well as collaboratively, this enables in-depth awareness of teaching strategies as the student teachers consider additional perspectives and insights before formulating their own follow-up actions. This collaborative effort could be termed ‘collective intelligence’ as Vandergrift and Goh maintain—the construction of knowledge and experience is not solely a matter for an individual learner, rather it is jointly constructed with others.

Collective intelligence has significant value for teacher education programmes as these discussions enrich perspectives of teaching strategies, strengthen underlying pedagogical principles, and help to hone key teacher moves to achieve lesson aims and objectives. Student teachers frequently highlight this aspect of their learning to be especially beneficial. If the goal is for these teachers to take on this mantle in the primary English classroom, incidental learning is insufficient. They would not be fully aware of the metacognitive practices they were engaged in and hence, would be unlikely to replicate effective practices for themselves in future contexts of learning. As such, these practices need to be made visible (e.g., using the thinking frames) and purposively discussed for these metacognitive practices to become impactful for student teachers. This would lead to stronger internalisation and eventually student teachers being able to enact these practices with greater ease, thus increasing the uptake in fostering metacognitive practices with children learning English. The idea being to impact student teachers to impact their learners, thereby ensuring the alignment and relevancy of primary teacher education and the classroom.

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4 Conclusion

It is increasingly important for teacher education to prioritise teacher metacognition in programmes for student teachers aiming to enter the primary English language education field. To achieve the wider goal of enabling pre-service teachers to become better learners for themselves and eventually for the children they teach, they first need to be equipped with a sufficiently rich repertoire of metacognitive practices. This chapter has highlighted initial steps for embedding such metacognitive practices in a teacher education programme, drawing on examples from an existing course in the Singaporean context. Key characteristics of these embedded practices which lend value to the overall learning as well as considerations to enhance these metacognitive practices have been highlighted. This chapter concludes with a fresh appreciation of the place and importance of metacognitive instruction in primary English teacher education. Growing thinking thinkers might appear rather ambitious, but like every journey in teacher education, it can be ignited by some initial steps taken during a principled pre-service programme.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Teaching Demonstration/Micro-teaching Discussion Frame

Lesson stages	Key moves	Reflections
1. Pre Reading Activating schema Book conventions Picture cues Initial predictions		

Lesson stages	Key moves	Reflections
2. During Reading Discover the story: Picture cues, story context (characters, plot, setting, themes), Responses to story Confirmation of initial predictions Further predictions Second reading task		
3. Post Reading Checking understanding		

Appendix 2 Teaching Attachment

	Part 1		
	TEACHING PROCESSES	Please tick (if observed)	What have I learnt …my reflections/comments …
1	**What I learnt from the pre-lesson discussions**		
	In the pre-lesson discussion, I deepened my understanding of learning objectives, lesson planning and the lesson preparation process.		
	In the pre-lesson discussion, I noted how important it is to plan an engaging English language lesson.		
	In the pre-lesson discussion, I noted the significance of the need to give children a sense of progress within a lesson.		
2	**What I learnt during the lesson observation**		
	The teacher has the learning outcomes of the lesson in mind during the lesson delivery.		
	I noticed that the teacher knows the importance of arousing and sustaining children’s interest and their participation in learning.		
	I noticed the use of voice and language for the age range.		
	I noticed ways to create an engaging lesson.		
	I noticed the ways the teacher checks understanding while monitoring children’s work.		
	I noticed that the teacher gave the children useful feedback on their work.		

	I noticed that the teacher provides the children with a clear written record of their learning.		
	I better understand the role of assessment for learning during a lesson.		
3	**What I learnt from the post-lesson discussions**		
	In the post-lesson discussion, the lesson strengths (and possible areas for improvement) were discussed.		
	I have started to consider ways I will incorporate some points in my own teaching practice.		
	Part 2		
	Grade/Class Observed:_______		
1	My reflections about what went well:		
2	My reflections about what could have been improved/done differently:		
3	Links/differences I noticed between what you have learnt at NIE and how this is applied in the classroom:		
4a	Were there any differences between your NIE course input and the classroom? If yes, please give examples.		
4b	What challenges between theory and practice arose and how did you address these in the classroom? Please give examples.		

Appendix 3 Teaching Attachment (Co-teaching Reflection)

	Part 1		
	A. TEACHING PROCESSES	**Please tick**	**Personal reflections/comments**
	LESSON PREPARATION		
	Demonstrates understanding of learning objectives		
	Uses age-appropriate teaching strategies, learning activities, and resources		
	Displays sound subject knowledge		
	Estimates timing realistically		
	Shows awareness of children’s backgrounds		
	LESSON DELIVERY		
	Creates an engaging introduction and closure		
	Paces the lesson appropriately		
	Arouses and sustains learners’ interest		

	Encourages learners’ active participation		
	Gives clear instructions		
	Makes good use of questions		
	Uses voice to create interest		
	Grades language appropriately for the learners’ ages and language level		
	Makes effective use of resources and materials		
	ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK		
	Gives learners appropriate feedback		
	Monitors and checks learners’ understanding		
	Provides learners with a clear written record		
	Varies assessment practices for the task/activity		
	POSITIVE CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE		
	Builds rapport with learners using personalisation		
	Creates a positive classroom environment		
	B. PROFESSIONALISM	**Please tick**	**Personal reflections/comments**
	LEARNER-CENTRED VALUES		
	Shows care and concern for children		
	Demonstrates warmth and enthusiasm		
	Is sensitive to sociocultural diversity		
	TEACHER ATTRIBUTES		
	Is receptive to feedback		
	Shows evidence of being reflective		
	Interacts well with the school community		
	MY REFLECTION(S)…		
	My reflections/thoughts on what went well and what could have been improved/done differently:		
	Part 2		
1.	What differences have you noticed in teaching styles during the lessons you observed? Please give examples.		
2.	What aspects from your course at NIE have you observed during lessons in schools? Please give examples of any links/differences.		
3.	What are the main aspects you have learned from your practicum about effective English language classroom practices?		

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15. Incorporating Pragmatics into Primary English Language Teacher Education

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1 Introduction

Pragmatics is an increasingly interdisciplinary area that focuses on how language is used to carry out social actions in context and how these social actions are perceived and negotiated by participants. Traditionally, pragmatics instruction for both adults and teenagers and children has been centred on the teaching of the communicative norms of inner circle varieties of English, most notably British and American English. Broadly speaking, instruction uses a range of implicit and explicit awareness-raising methods to help learners notice the range of linguistic forms used to carry out common speech acts such as requests, offers, apologies, compliments etc., and also to help them reflect on how contextual aspects such as the communicative setting or relationship between participants influence linguistic choices. It is also common for learners to be encouraged to compare speech act realisation patterns across different languages in order to become aware of cross-linguistic differences and avoid unintended pragmatic transfer (see Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2020; McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2020 for overviews).

Against the backdrop of the spread of English as a global language, pragmatics pedagogy is now coming to be located within a multilingual and intercultural perspective which takes into account the reality that English is currently used to mediate understanding and relationships amongst individuals from a diverse range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds (see chapters in McConachy & Liddicoat, 2021). Thus, whether the focus is on adults, teenagers or children, increasing importance is attributed to learners' awareness of variation, and the ability to think about communication in context from multiple perspectives and reflect on underlying assumptions about 'appropriate' communication within and across languages. As will be discussed in this chapter, such a shift in thinking about the goals of pedagogy has significant implications for teacher education.

Despite its importance, pragmatics tends to be an underrepresented area within language teacher education programmes (e.g., Glaser, 2018; Ishihara & Porcellato, 2021; Vásquez & Sharpless, 2009). The situation is even more dire in the case of education for primary English language teachers (PELT), where pragmatics has typically not been on the agenda. Primary education, at least generally in Europe, comprises learners from age 5–13 years (Drew & Hasselgreen, 2008); thus, the focus herein is particularly teachers in the upper age groups: teachers of learners aged 9 onwards. As metalinguistic awareness is thought to increase from the age of 7–8 (Ishihara & Chiba, 2014), learners aged 9 onwards may be more receptive to addressing nuances related to pragmatics and communication due to their emerging ability to objectify and compare languages, as well as manipulate language forms (Tellier & Roehr-Brackin, 2017).

This chapter aims to bridge theory and practice in relation to the incorporation of pragmatics in PELT education. The chapter will consider key issues concerning the pragmatics dimension of teacher education and then propose a number of theoretical principles and pedagogical applications for teacher education which are aligned with a multilingual and intercultural perspective on pragmatics. These proposals can inform the development of teachers’ own theoretical and practical understanding of pragmatics and their ability to raise primary English learners’ metapragmatic awareness in a sensitive and developmentally appropriate way.

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2 Current Issues and Research

One issue that surfaces in the literature on language teacher cognition is that teachers tend to find pragmatics a difficult area to pin down, or they associate it broadly with the phenomenon of politeness (e.g., Savić, 2016; Schauer, 2021). This is unsurprising given that research points to a relative neglect of pragmatics in teacher education programmes or a predominantly theoretical approach centred on pragmatic theories such as speech act theory and politeness theories (e.g., Ishihara & Cohen, 2022; Vásquez & Fioramonte, 2011). This means that there is generally much less emphasis on practical issues related to curriculum, materials, and instructional strategies. This can lead to the creation of a theory–practice gap, where teachers have some theoretical understanding of pragmatics but are unsure about what is to be taught and how it can be taught. As Savvidou and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2019) highlight, ‘knowledge and skills necessary to teach L2 pragmatics and intercultural awareness may not come automatically to all L2 teachers’ (p. 40). This leads to the situation where teachers incorporate attention to pragmatic features in their teaching in an ad hoc way, or they decide that, given various difficulties, it is simply better for learners to develop pragmatic ability when they have the chance to use English in real-world interactions. Given this situation, it is important to think about teacher professional learning from a perspective which recognises the need to interlink theoretical knowledge with pedagogical knowledge and the cultivation of teachers’ own personalised understandings of language use in context.

Ishihara and Cohen (2022) suggest that it is useful to categorise teacher knowledge for the teaching of pragmatics in terms of three broad types:

1. Subject matter knowledge

2. Pedagogical content knowledge

3. Knowledge of the learners and local educational context

These authors see *subject matter knowledge* as primarily related to teachers' knowledge of L2 pragmatic norms, contextual variation, and their metapragmatic awareness. In other words, teachers should have a general understanding of the linguistic forms conventionally used to accomplish different speech acts and how the selection of forms is influenced by elements of context. Ishihara and Cohen (2022) describe metapragmatic awareness as a broader awareness that teachers use to decide how and when to use their knowledge of specific pragmatic norms. Meanwhile, *pedagogical content knowledge* relates to teachers' strategies for instruction and assessment. *Knowledge of the learners and local educational context* relates to the need for teachers to be aware of the particular characteristics of their learners in terms of their linguistic and (multi)cultural profiles, attitudes towards the target language, and the relative importance of pragmatics in the context of institutional goals and educational emphases. We concur that this is a very useful way of thinking about teacher knowledge, as each domain is also relevant to the teaching of primary learners.

One particularly important issue when considering the development of teachers' subject matter knowledge is how teachers understand the notion of 'pragmatic norm' and how rigidly they see the options for achieving 'appropriate' pragmatic choices in the English language. If teachers perceive speech acts and other pragmatic phenomena to be tightly constrained by rigid norms of appropriateness as determined by 'native speakers', this can naturally lead to the perception that their job is to 'teach' learners how to be appropriate. Similarly, if teachers believe that effective communication in English requires the exclusion of other languages, they may be likely to eliminate multilingual elements such as code switching or translanguaging from teaching and learning as well (Ishihara & Porcellato, 2021). In this sense, there is a close relationship between subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge—between the ways that teachers conceptualise pragmatics and the ways they envision their role as teachers and their pedagogical strategies. Such an understanding means that teachers' awareness and acceptance of pragmatic variation is particularly consequential for classroom pedagogy. If teachers see the use of speech act strategies and orientations towards politeness as subject to cultural and contextual variability, then it is easier to see their role as effectively scaffolding learners' ability to engage with this diversity rather than imposing rigid understandings of correctness. In other words, when pragmatics is viewed from the perspective of diversity, the pedagogical emphasis shifts to the development of learners' metapragmatic awareness—the ability to articulate one's conscious understanding of pragmatic meanings within and across languages and cultures—rather than simple internalisation of 'native speaker' norms (McConachy, 2013).

In line with the above, Savvidou and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2019) suggest that what teachers need is the ability to 'sensitize students to pragmatic meanings and develop students' pragmatic awareness so that they become able to notice and interpret pragmatic meaning when they encounter it outside their classrooms' (p. 42). This includes the ability to be able to help learners identify and understand pragmatic differences across languages and to consider the implications of these differences for their own language use. Ishihara and Cohen (2022) also place particular emphasis on the teachers' ability to direct their learners' attention to the features of contextual language use in a way that allows for reflection on pragmatic norms and exploration of cultural meanings. Although much of this literature deals with adult learners, the ability to notice features of language and think analytically about what people say is also present in primary learners and becomes increasingly sophisticated with age, especially from 9 onwards (Tellier & Roehr-Brackin, 2017). Thus, the ability to promote reflection on language use is a core area for development in teacher education that is highly transferable across the teaching of adults, teenagers and children. To develop this ability, teachers need to gain experience in the act of reflecting on language use themselves and to talk analytically about processes of meaning making, thus developing their own metapragmatic awareness. In this sense, teachers need to experience for themselves the kind of experiences they need to create in the classroom. Vásquez and Fioramonte (2011) advocate the use of a variety of instructional activities to help teachers develop their own metapragmatic awareness whilst considering the implications for pedagogical practice, such as reflection on critical incidents, ethnographic methods (collecting and analysing pragmatic data), exploration of different instructional approaches, techniques, lesson planning, and materials development.

Another important resource for teacher knowledge and metapragmatic awareness that has been emphasised recently is reflective understandings of teachers' own experiences of intercultural communication. Savvidou and Economidou-Kogetsidis' (2019) study of Greek and Cypriot teachers found that although teachers' formal understanding of the notion of pragmatics and pragmatic theory was sometimes sketchy, teachers' own communicative experiences were found to be a very important source of insight into the nature of communication and ways to communicate these insights through pedagogy. Based on these findings, the authors argue that teacher education should probe teachers' own beliefs about pragmatics and its instruction, as well as helping them explore their own identities. Similarly, Chen and McConachy's (2021) study on Chinese language teachers has shown how reflection on teachers' own communicative experiences can be a powerful way of formulating a pedagogic stance vis-à-vis the diversity of the English language and the situated nature of pragmatic interpretation. The important point to make here for teacher education is that the metapragmatic awareness that underlies pedagogy is not limited to understanding of theoretical issues per se, but also incorporates a highly personalised form of understanding that engages teachers' own 'interpretive framework of knowledge, understanding, practices, and values built over time' (Scarino, 2014, p. 394).

Regarding knowledge of the learners and the local educational context (item three in Ishihara and Cohen's framework), one area that cannot be ignored is knowledge of the specific characteristics of primary English language learners and their learning of pragmatics. This is an area in which empirical literature is still rather sparse. Myrset and Savić's (2021) systematic review of studies investigating the metapragmatic awareness of 5–13-year-old learners found that this population is much less researched than adult learners. Research investigating upper primary learners'—ages 9–13—understandings of pragmatics in ELT contexts suggests that learners are capable of drawing on a variety of interpretative frames of reference to engage with pragmatics, including various personal experiences, evaluations, and knowledge. Primary learners are able to construct interpretations and evaluative stances in relation to instances of language use through politeness evaluations (e.g., polite vs. impolite), cultural references (e.g., norms of behaviour), exploration of feelings of the interlocutors, and cross-linguistic comparisons (Savić & Myrset, 2021). Thus, where learners are actively engaged in thinking about the L1 and L2 and considering their own experiences of observing and participating in communication, research with EFL learners aged 9–13 years suggests that the primary classroom is a fertile context for beginning to explore some complexities and nuances related to communication across languages and cultures (Ishihara, 2013; Savić, 2021; Savić & Myrset, 2021, 2022).

3 Practical Applications

Principles for Teacher Education: Preparing to Teach Pragmatics to Primary Learners

Based on the review of issues in the previous section, we now suggest a number of principles to inform PELT education in the area of pragmatics, acknowledging that content specific to primary learners is likely to form one part of the larger pragmatics curriculum in teacher education programmes. Furthermore, confidently teaching pragmatics in sensitive and nuanced ways requires developing one’s own understandings of pragmatics. Thus, the practical applications aim to address various facets of teacher knowledge (Ishihara & Cohen, 2022).

Principle 1: Adopt a Multilingual and Intercultural Perspective on Pragmatics

Whether teachers are preparing to teach children, teenagers or adults, or all three levels, it is important that their understanding of pragmatics comes to acknowledge pragmatic variation within and across different varieties of English, as well as how meanings are negotiated by speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018). Beyond the standard canon of readings on topics in pragmatics such as Gricean maxims, speech act theory, and politeness, research from fields such as intercultural pragmatics, cultural linguistics, and English as a lingua franca offers important insights into diversity in speech act strategies, interactional management, and the multilingual negotiation of meaning (Cogo & House, 2018; Kecskes, 2019). Research is also shedding light on the diverse conceptualisations of social relations and perceptions of rights and obligations that influence judgements about ‘appropriate’ language use (McConachy & Spencer-Oatey, 2021; Sharifian, 2017; Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). Within the global speakership of the English language, individuals inevitably hold diverse conceptions of social relationships and normative understandings about ‘appropriate’ ways to mark these relationships through linguistic choices, which may be informed by different orientations towards values such as solidarity, harmony, fairness, dignity, and more (Spencer-Oatey & Kádár, 2021). Thus, it is important for teachers to have opportunities to consider how assumptions about social relationships lead individuals to perceive language use and people in terms of categories such as polite/impolite, appropriate/inappropriate, sincere/insincere, etc.

In addition to literature on pragmatics itself, there is also an increasing amount of literature that looks at learners’ pragmatic development and issues of pedagogy within the context of English as a global language (e.g., Tajeddin & Alemi, 2021) and intercultural understanding (e.g., McConachy & Liddicoat, 2021) which teachers can be encouraged to engage with. Such a dual theoretical focus would provide teachers with necessary understanding of the reality of communication and what this means for learners and teachers themselves. As part of engaging with this literature, student teachers could create short presentations through podcasts, pamphlets, or posters addressing specific topics from the literature, for example, variational pragmatics. As a further step the teacher students could contextualise the literature that they have read by creating short video-recorded role plays or video documentaries/ethnographies, in which they explore local pragmatic behaviours.

Principle 2: Make Insights About the Pragmatics Learning of Primary Children Accessible

Whilst much of the content connected to pragmatic theories and research is also applicable to primary learners in a general sense, teacher education should also encourage understanding of the specific characteristics of primary learners and their learning of L2 pragmatics, as informed by the emerging research literature. That is, teacher education should aim to draw connections between approaches for ELT and primary learners’ potential pragmatic learning, thus highlighting how to approach pragmatics and what to focus on with these learners.

One insight from the literature that is particularly important is that since primary learners' cognition is still relatively reliant on concrete experiences rather than abstract thinking (McKay, 2006), they are likely to need much scaffolding from teachers in order to reflect on pragmatic forms and meanings, such as through multilingual and multimodal support (see Ishihara, 2013; Myrset & Savić, 2021). Teacher education can aim to make use of sociocultural theoretic perspectives on learning which emphasise that learning is mediated by knowledge and perspectives introduced through interpersonal interaction (Vygotsky, 2012/1934). From a Vygotskian perspective, dialogue—a unity between communication and learning, mediated by more capable peers and teachers—becomes a significant aspect for development and reflection, and for developing metapragmatic awareness (Myrset, 2021; Savić, 2021). It is, therefore, important for teachers to understand the role of interaction in helping learners experience learning that is both conceptual and experiential.

A related insight here concerns the important role of peers in pragmatic learning at the primary level. As primary learners' emotional development is characterised by moving from the internal self to becoming more attuned to their environment, with dependence shifting from adults to peers (McKay, 2006), peer work is likely to be a particularly fruitful context for learning. Working with peers may provide dialogic spaces where learners can scaffold each other's understanding by co-constructing meaning about pragmatics phenomena, such as politeness (Savić, 2021), particularly when such collaboration involves physical movement. As McKay (2006, p. 10) holds, in the primary years, children experience continuing physical development where 'children tire more easily from sitting than from running'. Thus, physical growth should be taken into account in classroom activities and language assessment tasks, for instance by incorporating 'moving, pointing, circling, or colouring' as an additional task to the language response itself. Incorporating such tasks in pragmatics research has also shown to facilitate learner reflections about language use (see, for instance, Myrset & Savić, 2021).

Another important source of insights for teachers comes from the published literature on primary learners' metapragmatic awareness, which deals with foci such as irony, speech acts, idioms, and formality (see Myrset & Savić, 2021). Published studies in this area provide useful theoretical understanding and also pedagogical inspiration concerning approaches for prompting reflection, such as the tasks and activities used to elicit data from primary learners. Such published studies give student teachers of English insights into how they can enable their learners to work in various modalities, for example, a continuum of (im)politeness and (in)formality as visual support (Fig. 15.1) where learners indicate their perceptions by, for instance, pointing or circling (Ishihara, 2013), to support them when expressing their understandings.

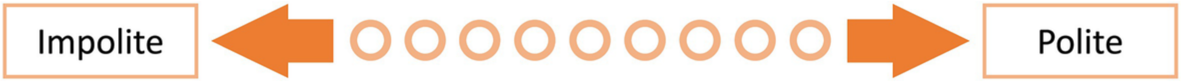

Fig. 15.1 A continuum of (im)politeness. (Adapted from Ishihara, 2013)

Principle 3: Link Teachers' Metapragmatic Awareness to Pedagogic Knowledge

As discussed earlier, the teaching of pragmatics in English language classrooms is guided not only by teachers' theoretical understanding but also (if not more) by their broader metapragmatic awareness and intuitive sense for language shaped by their own experiences of interacting, learning, and teaching languages. There are at least two main interconnected dimensions to consider here.

The first is that reflection on teachers' own communicative experiences in the target language provides a useful way of helping teachers explore their own everyday understandings of pragmatics and perceptions of appropriate language use, as well as how their own understandings influence what and how they teach in the classroom. Teachers can meaningfully reflect on their own critical instances of communication or their more general perceptions about how key speech acts such as apologies, compliments, offers etc., can be carried out appropriately in different contexts. Such reflections not only allow teachers to become aware of their own assumptions about communication and social relationships but also to notice that many judgements are largely intuitive and linked to emotional reactions (Chen & McConachy, 2021). As also highlighted by Savvidou and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2019), reflection on experience is a powerful source of insight for language teachers, and thus it is worth harnessing this potential more systematically by creating opportunities for the sharing of narratives of experience with other teachers. Such collaborative dialogue can promote professional learning due to the particular power of personal stories in eliciting emotional responses and challenging preconceptions (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2001).

The second dimension is that teachers' own communicative experiences and insights can also constitute a pedagogical tool for teaching primary learners once teachers become adept at narrating their experiences. As Ishihara (2012) suggests, narratives of experience 'can serve as an effective attention-getter that can be entertaining, memorable and pedagogical' (p. 7). Considering children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth (McKay, 2006), as well as their inherent curiosity (Ness, 2019), anecdotes told by teachers about their own lived experiences may thus become a powerful scaffold for pragmatic learning. Anecdotes from lived experiences, accompanied with visual support (e.g., photographs) and open-ended questions, such as 'How do you think that made me feel?', which encourage learners to take up multiple perspectives on an experience, may help primary learners consider the intentions and emotional reactions of speakers in different ways. Teachers can also consider how anecdotes can be used to create links with learners' own experiences. For instance, children could be asked if they have similar examples of when someone seemed rude or impolite in communication, which they can then be encouraged to elaborate using the learners' available languages. At the same time, it is also worth bearing in mind that accounts of individual experience cannot necessarily be used to generalise, and it is thus important to avoid perpetuating stereotypes of different linguistic and cultural groups (Ishihara, 2012).

Principle 4: Aim to Develop Teachers' Multilingual Scaffolding Repertoire

In line with a broadly multilingual and intercultural perspective on pragmatics, it is critical that teachers themselves become skilled at facilitating engagement with and through the different languages relevant in a particular learning context. Research with primary learners has shown that use of the L1 promotes versatility with languages, such as enabling learners to compare L1 and L2 linguistic behaviours and translate utterances to make judgements about perceived formality (e.g., Ishihara, 2013; Savić & Myrset, 2021, 2022), thus also supporting their development of metalinguistic awareness (Tellier & Roehr-Brackin, 2017). Additionally, since children are spontaneously capable of identifying notions such as norms, language use, and social characteristics in their L1 (Buson & Billiez, 2013), the strategic use of learners' L1 can bring depth to any discussions about contextually appropriate language use and how students view different social relationships. Additional benefits to strategically incorporating the L1 into teacher–learner interactions and peer work is that it can reduce anxiety, increase comprehension, and foster affective aspects of language learning (Chavarría & Bonany, 2006). Rather than viewing the L1 as an obstacle for language learning, student teachers and in-service teachers alike should be provided opportunities to reflect on how they can utilise the learners' L1 as scaffold in pragmatics instruction to foster sensitivity towards language use and interpretation in global contexts.

Although there are many possible approaches to helping teachers develop a multilingual scaffolding repertoire, one useful starting point in contexts where teachers are competent in learners' L1 is to identify points of pragmatic divergence between the two languages, such as different strategies for carrying out requests, apologies, greetings, etc. Teachers can then consider ways to juxtapose such strategies for learners (or encourage children to identify them themselves) and for learners to experiment with different ways of carrying out key speech acts in both languages according to a range of contextual specifications. The teacher thus scaffolds pragmatics learning in a way in which differences between languages are a point of active exploration and in which teachers' and learners' multilingualism is publicly valued. As discussion about pragmatics in the classroom often develops into broader discussions about social roles and relationships, the flexible use of different languages can facilitate deeper pragmatic learning. In the context of teacher education, it would be beneficial for teachers to think about how they could use their own and students' multilingual repertoire to create opportunities for connecting the study of language use to broader multilingual and intercultural awareness (Ishihara & Porcellato, 2021).

Implementing a Task-Based Approach to Developing Pedagogic Knowledge

With those principles in mind, we now present a concrete activity that could be used to help teachers link their theoretical knowledge of pragmatics, their personal metapragmatic awareness, their pedagogical knowledge, and their multilingual scaffolding repertoire to work creatively with materials.

The pragmatic content of ELT coursebooks is often criticised due to decontextualised presentation or unrealistically rigid explanations of pragmatic rules (see McConachy & Hata, 2013; Schauer, 2019). What this means is that primary English teachers are frequently in the position where they need to find creative ways to encourage learners to actively consider the significance of linguistic choices in view of context and to take up a broader range of perspectives than might be prompted by coursebooks themselves. As such a skill does not necessarily come naturally, it is important for teachers to have opportunities to (critically) reflect on pragmatic content and practise developing questions for learners that promote deeper engagement (McConachy & Hata, 2013). The activity below can help teachers develop their ability to construct questions that promote primary learners' attention to language use in context, supported by use of a multimodal resource.

As a first step, teachers can use their pragmatic knowledge and awareness to identify the speech acts explicitly or implicitly introduced in the material. For example, to deal with apologies one could explore primary ELT coursebooks for content that may help focus on apologies in language teaching. It is important then to consider whether apology formulae are sufficiently contextualised or not, whether they reflect children's speech, and how the norms for use of different phrases are explained in relation to different contextual variables, such as relationship and severity of offense. When language use can be contextualised in the form of a short dialogue, for example, those appearing in ELT coursebooks, it is likely to be helpful to draw on a conceptual model of context to consider what elements might be relevant. For example, McConachy (2009) has provided guidance on how teachers might be able to work with Hymes' (1974) SPEAKING framework to identify contextual features and find ways of drawing learners' attention to them. A number of questioning strategies are also provided which enable learners to notice the use of pragmatic forms, interactional structure and effects, and cross-cultural differences. Some basic types are presented below with simple examples which will have to be adapted depending on the topic and teaching context (adapted based on McConachy, 2009):

> Language-based question: *Why does [speaker X] say 'I'm sorry'?*
> Function-based question: *Where does [speaker X] show that they are sorry?*

Speculative question: *Do you think the speakers have a close relationship? How do you know?*
Comparative question: *Is it usual to apologise like this in your first language?*

As there can be a gap between teachers' ability to analyse context and their ability to construct questions, it can be worth allocating enough time for student teachers to brainstorm potentially useful questions and then practice asking and answering them together with their peers. When it comes to the latter, we recommend incorporating visual stimuli, such as the 'Emoticon Task' described below.

The Emoticon Task

The 'Emoticon task' is a data elicitation technique developed and employed by Savić and Myrset (2022) to elicit metapragmatic data from Norwegian learners of English, in groups of three to four. The learners were in 3rd, 5th, and 7th grade of primary school (aged around 9, 11, and 13). Using a worksheet with three emoticons (see Fig. 15.2), the learners individually appraised a learner-produced English request by placing a post-it note on an emoticon depending on whether they thought it was a 'nice', a 'so-so', or a 'not so nice' request. The learners were then invited to explain their choices in their L1 or L2 (see Myrset & Savić, 2021 for a detailed description of the procedures). Thus, the 'Emoticon task' provides a visual technique that elicits multimodal and multilingual responses from learners. Facilitating multimodality provides learners with choice in response-modes, generating spaces for learners to share how they view the world (Ibrahim, 2021). In PELT, the 'Emoticon task' can also be adapted in numerous ways. For instance, objects rather than emoticons could be used or the classroom could be divided into sections representing each emoticon where the learners respond to the phenomena by moving (e.g., walking or hopping).

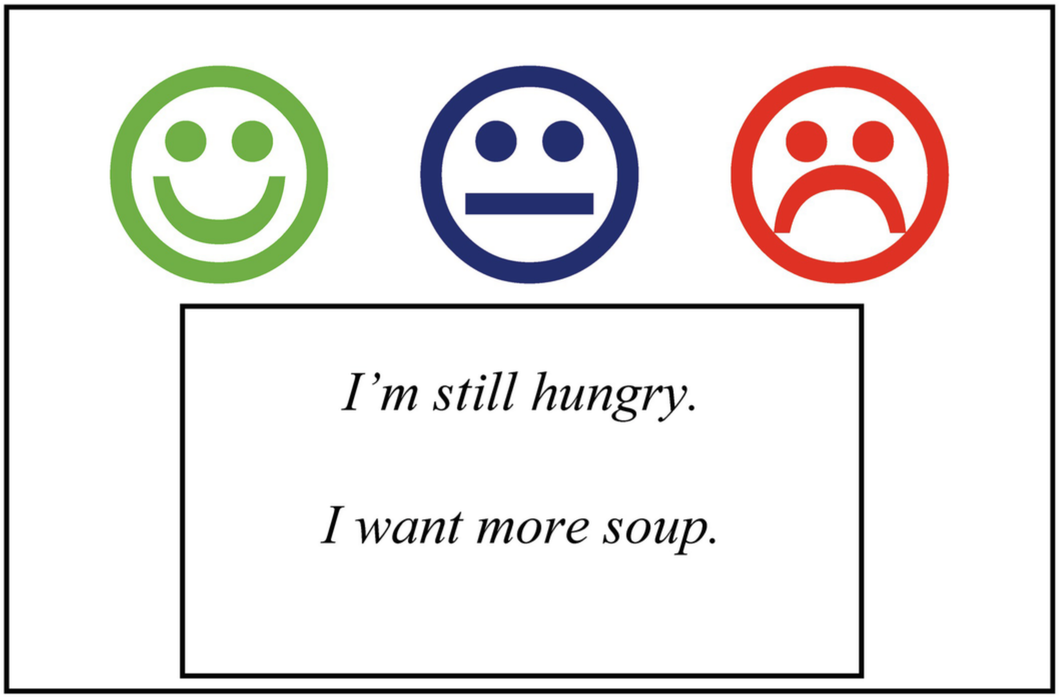
I'm still hungry.
I want more soup.

Fig. 15.2 The Emoticon task (From Myrset and Savić, 2021). This request is a learner-produced request from the study

Below, we provide an illustration of how the Emoticon task could be used to scaffold teachers' ability and confidence to perform contextual analysis in the primary English language classroom. Prior to the activity, the learners can employ their own subject knowledge by exploring primary ELT coursebooks or other materials, such as finding clips on YouTube or scripts from movies and TV series, for appropriate dialogues. The results of such explorations can be used by student teachers to create shared resources for available materials, for instance, indexed by pragmatic targets (e.g., greetings and apologies). The activity has been illustrated in the following dialogue and could be readily run by the teacher educator. Since not all educational contexts provide student teachers with opportunities to have first-hand experiences of teaching, for example, via teaching practice, here it is presented as an experiential approach: a roleplay in groups where student teachers take turns playing the role of the class teacher and the children. In contexts where student teachers have access to primary classrooms, the activity can be tested with learners as action research, followed by post-reflections where they share experiences with their peers about what worked and how could it be adapted.

An Illustration

In the roleplay, the teacher introduces a dialogue, exemplified below, to the learners together with the Emoticon task (Fig. 15.3). The dialogue can be read aloud by the peers acting as learners or using dramatic approaches, such as Readers' Theatre (e.g., Shepard, 2004).

> Teacher: Your Maths exam is starting now. You have three hours.
> Max: Sol? Sol! Sol! Can I borrow your eraser?
> Sol: Sure.
> Max: Thanks, buddy! Sol, can I borrow a pencil? This one's broken!
> Sol: Yes, OK. Here you are.
> Max: Sol, can I borrow your ruler?
> Sol: I'm sorry, but I'm using it. You can have it in a minute, OK?
> Max: Ok, that's fine! Psst! Sol! Can you tell me the answer to question 3B? Is it 93?
> Sol: Sorry, I can't! This is an exam! Can I have another paper, please?
> Teacher: Yes, of course.
> Sol: Max, can you stop that?
> Teacher: Sol Gardner! This is an exam! Why are you talking?
>
> (Adapted from Hastings & McKinlay, *Wider World 1 Students' Book* (2017, p. 52), Pearson Education Limited. Original content presented under fair use principles for educational purposes.)

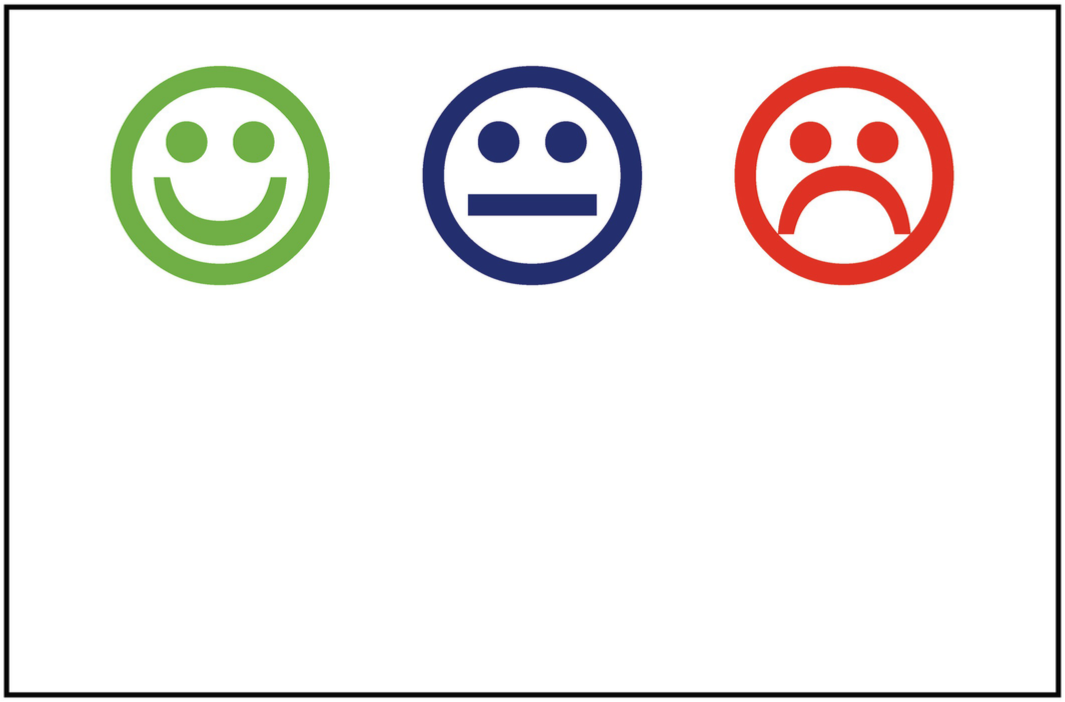

Fig. 15.3 A blank version of the Emoticon task

Although the dialogue above does not include any contextual information, with student teachers' enhanced subject knowledge it is easily discerned that the intended pedagogical emphasis is on requests and responses. Teachers would be able to draw on their pragmatic knowledge to identify a series of conventionally indirect requests, that is, 'Can I/you…?' (see Blum-Kulka et al., 1989 for request strategies), and responses, for example, refusals. Given that the dialogue is under the heading 'Polite Requests', teachers might also note that the ELT coursebook is conveying the message that being polite is about making conventionally indirect requests with the modal verb 'can', representing a view of politeness as inherent to certain forms. This is an invitation for challenging teachers' perceptions about politeness:

1. *Why do you think the authors have presented these requests as polite, and do you agree with them?*

Beginning to question the assumption of an inexorable relationship between forms and politeness is particularly important as it helps develop an understanding that politeness is more than just selecting the 'correct' forms. This is particularly important from an intercultural perspective, in which communication takes place across various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and can be supplemented with other forms of material, for example, age-appropriate texts and videos, to gain further insights.

Teachers can then be encouraged to create questions to address the lack of contextual cues in the dialogue. For instance, the function-based aspect of the dialogue can be addressed by asking the students:

1. *What does Max ask for in the dialogue?*

2. *How does Sol respond?*

In addition, speculative questions can help the learners 'to give their own interpretations, rather than search for a correct answer' (McConachy, 2009, p. 122):

3. *Why do you think Sol refused some of Max's requests?*

The ‘Emoticon task’ could then be used to explore the perceived feelings of the speaker and/or the form of a request, thus raising awareness about perceptions of requests:

4. *Max asks Sol for the answer to question 3B. How do you think that makes Sol feel, and why do you think so?*
5. *Max asks Sol: ‘Can you tell me the answer to question 3B?’ What do you think about the language use, and why do you think so?*

The student teachers acting as children can respond individually by writing their responses under their preferred emoticon or by engaging in group discussions guided by their peer acting as teacher.

To explore intercultural aspects through the dialogue, comparative questions, such as comparing the request strategies presented with those in their L1, engages lived experiences where the L1 serves as scaffold:

1. *In your language, do people request like this?*
2. *How do you feel about the style of the requests, and why?*

Again, the peer acting as teacher can use the Emoticon task as support for an additional non-verbal response by asking the learners to show how they feel (question 2), for instance, through pointing. Furthermore, comparative and speculative questions may prompt reflection about how the material is presented as ‘polite’:

3. *What would be a polite request in your first language?*
4. *Why do you think the authors have selected this request form as polite? Are conventionally indirect requests always polite?*

Such questions may prompt discussions about perceived politeness, and the contextual variability through negotiations in communication. This could be further explored by the teacher students searching for both authentic and developing age-appropriate materials, for instance, videos on YouTube in which children request or English language learning videos aimed at teaching requests to children, to investigate variability in use.

These applications aim to raise student teachers' metapragmatic awareness whilst experiencing techniques that can be applied and adapted in their future teaching. To further develop teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge about the learners, the 'Emoticon task' could be followed up with questions about applications for the language classroom. For instance, based on this illustrative example, the following questions could be asked:

1. *How could this be changed to make it appropriate for the age and proficiency level of your future learners?*
2. *How could this activity be adapted to incorporate movement?*
3. *Could other pragmatic phenomena, for instance apologies or greetings, be addressed through this activity? If so, how?*
4. *What kinds of questions, for example, function-based, could you ask to prompt learner reflections?*
5. *Which parts of the dialogue could be used to draw attention to pragmatics? Could this activity be applied to other dialogues you have found?*

4 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have highlighted key issues in conceptualising teacher knowledge for the teaching of pragmatics with primary English language learners and provided a number of key principles informed by a multilingual and intercultural perspective on pragmatics. With English as a global language, in which meaning is negotiated across language and cultural backgrounds, it is becoming increasingly important that teachers are provided with tools to develop their own and their learners' pragmatic awareness in sensitive ways. It is important to note that pragmatics is a complex aspect of language, with multifaceted interpretations of meaning, in which development continues throughout adolescence and into adulthood. Consequently, just as pragmatics instruction in PELT is just the point of departure for pragmatic development, the aspects presented herein provide some guidance for building this scaffold, which involves enabling learners from primary onwards to make use of their lived experiences to (co-)construct new insights in English whilst also taking into account their growth.

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Afterword

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What the Book Teaches Us

For some time, scholars in the field of teaching English as a school subject have been calling for a focus on appropriate pedagogies in response to the yawning gap in the field (e.g., Garton & Copland, 2019; Littlejohn, this volume). Adopted pedagogies, such as versions of communicative language teaching (CLT), have not been successful, with teachers and learners struggling to adapt the approach for local educational contexts. This is partly because these pedagogies were designed for adult learners in heterogeneous classes who were taught by someone who did not know their language(s). However, the main reason was because the classrooms in which CLT was traditionally practised—well-resourced, small numbers, highly motivated students—are a far cry from the classrooms in which teachers of English to children find themselves. These are often over-crowded, poorly resourced and populated by children with different levels, motivations and educational needs. Therefore, the time is more than ripe for a volume which takes up the challenge of how to teach English in the early years and primary school sectors, and the selection of chapters presented here provides an important first step in response to scholars' calls.

Although the chapters are separated into two sections—learners and teachers—four themes emerge as central in the discussion of innovative practices. They are:

1. **Multilingualism and interculturalism.** As some chapter writers point out, many of the children learning in primary classrooms are already multilingual. This means that multilingual pedagogies such as translanguaging present few challenges to these children. Indeed, translanguaging is both recognisable and helpful to them. Shi's chapter, 'Enriching early years English language education with translanguaging', for example, provides classroom extracts which

demonstrate how children’s self-esteem, confidence and language can all be enhanced through an approach which enables them to draw on their linguistic repertoires to make and understand meaning. In contrast, teachers and teacher educators may struggle with an approach that seems to go against the English through English hegemony which has dominated English language pedagogical approaches for at least forty years. In her chapter, Ibrahim points out that ‘The vast majority of English language teachers and teacher trainers are bilingual or multilingual, yet neither teaching practice nor teacher education programmes are tapping into this significant reservoir of lived and experiential knowledge of multilingualism’. This point is reiterated by Myrset and McConachy who suggest working with primary teachers on developing pragmatic awareness in children’s English classes, with a focus on intercultural understandings.

2. **Learning in schools.** Globally, English language teaching to children takes place in schools. This has led to a shift in thinking and labelling from ‘teaching English to young learners’, where the focus has been on private classes for privileged children, to ‘English as a school subject’ and ‘primary English language teaching’, with a concomitant recognition that most English language teaching happens in the state sector. This has huge implications for both pedagogies for teaching English to children and the unit of analysis in research in the field. Littlejohn in his chapter explicitly recognises the failure of imported approaches to teaching children and makes the case for language learning and teaching derived from principles which have at their heart engagement and purpose. Waddington also makes the case a principled approach, this time for language teachers, suggesting that ‘before considering *what* or *how* to teach, student teachers are presented with key driving questions to help them acquire knowledge of the main objectives of early years language learning and to reflect on some of the challenges and difficulties that arise within the current educational context’. Both approaches require teachers to be able to make informed decisions about appropriate pedagogies for their own classrooms.

3. **Literacy.** The volume recognises that children learning in today’s classrooms must learn to decode more than the written word. Neokleous suggests in his chapter that teachers should respond to this

challenge through developing children's digital literacy so that they can navigate the digital world safely. Shin is concerned with multimodal texts and working with children to develop their visual literacy. Both recognise that criticality is central to all literacy, and they provide a number of ways that this can be taught. In Ellis and Gruenbaum's chapter, the focus is also on literacy, this time through children listening to stories being read aloud, which they argue, *'provide a meaningful context for language learning and use'*. Valente goes further, suggesting that picturebooks can be exploited to go beyond the text and challenge assumptions about the worlds they present: a clear call for critical literacy practice.

4. **Assessment.** Teachers struggle to assess English development and proficiency in children. In many countries, assessing children at a young age is discouraged and deemed unhelpful. In most, however, assessing children is another task for teachers to carry out to provide data for schools and parents/caregivers. Assessment tools are often determined outside the classroom—by head teachers, regional boards, ministries of education. Others must develop their own approaches, often with little training in how to do so. Both Rixon and Butler make the case for assessment for learning, rather than assessment of learning, which is summative and less focused on development. Butler suggests that as part of assessment for learning teachers engage learners in self-assessment. This, she argues, leads to effective learning as children focus on what they can already do and what they want to do, which has a motivating effect. Of course, such approaches may not satisfy authorities which require numerical data. However, they may address a key global issue in primary education—engaging and motivating children to learn English (see Copland et al., in press)—and thus go some way to reducing the challenges many teachers face in the English as a school subject classroom.

Going Forward

The editors begin their introduction with a focus on the African philosophy of Ubuntu and describe how they have drawn upon it in their understandings of learning languages in early years and primary education.

Introducing a theoretical lens from a continent that has traditionally been ignored in terms of insight (Pennycook & Makoni, 2019) is an imperative in the work of ELT groups to decolonise English language teaching (e.g., Lin & Martin, 2005). However, it is also important to recognise that the challenges faced in primary education in African primary schools and other developing countries continue to be marginalised. Current work on the project English as a school subject (www.ESS.stir.ac.uk) has been revealing in this regard and suggests that some of the innovative approaches advocated in this volume may be out of reach in these contexts. For example, in many countries the pandemic revealed the paucity of digital availability, meaning that when many children in the Global North were getting at least some kind of education online, many children in the Global South were not (see Copland et al., 2022). Developing digital and multimodal literacy might be less important than developing traditional, functional literacy and helping children in these contexts to catch up on many lost months in the classroom. Likewise, the call to 'get rid of desks' (Ibrahim, 2022, cited by Valente & Xerri in their Introduction) has been realised in many classrooms in Malawi, not so that children can move around and engage in art, music and nature (ibid.) but so that more children can be squeezed into the classroom space in a country where demand for schooling far outweighs the availability. On the other hand, teachers in African and Latin American countries (and elsewhere) have much to teach us about innovative practices in translanguaging and how to draw on the languages of children in class to enhance understandings of English. As a community of scholars, teacher educators and teachers with a focus on English as a school subject, we must find a way to include Global South perspectives and experiences in our understandings of practice, innovative or otherwise. Only then can we enter truly into the spirit of Ubuntu, 'I am because you are; you are because we are' (Makalela, 2016, p. 188).

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